ON SIMONY, SODOMY AND SACRIFICE IN THE SCULPTURES ON THE ABBEY CHURCH OF SAINTE-MARIE AT SOUILLAC

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ABSTRACT

The early-twelfth century sculptures now located within the nave of the Benedictine abbey church of Sainte-Marie at Souillac, France, formerly considered to be the fragmentary remains of a Romanesque portal program, are here read iconographically to form a cohesive, fully integrated and meaningful whole. A careful observation of the sculptures, in conjunction with near-contemporaneous artistic and textual comparators, permits a decoding of their symbolism and reveals the existence of highly sophisticated commentary, from the perspective of coenobitic monasticism, on a number of the more contentious political, ecclesiological and theological issues of the day. The program is read to be informed by and to reflect the clash of ideals within the Western Church surrounding aspects of papal reform from the latter half of the eleventh century.

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There are certain individuals without whose assistance this thesis would not have been possible. I consider myself highly privileged to have had as my thesis advisor Professor Claire Labrecque of the Department of History at the University of Winnipeg. I am particularly grateful to her for allowing me, from the outset, the freedom to pursue an unlikely approach to the sculptures. Whatever reservations she may have had initially, she did not voice them. When the thesis ultimately began to take shape, she was entirely supportive, generous of her time and extensive knowledge, and extremely helpful. I thank her.

The comments of the thesis committee have been intelligent, informed and insightful. This paper reflects many of their suggestions. My study of the sculptures at Souillac is a work in progress and the comments of the committee members will continue to inform this work. I presented a very early version of a segment of this thesis to the 2012 annual conference of the Canadian Association of Medieval Art Historians. I am grateful for the encouragement and the advice offered by the conference participants. The Interlibrary Lending department at the University of Winnipeg deserves particular mention. .Somehow, they managed to come up with what I was looking for.

Finally, I thank my partner Bev for putting up with it. It has not been the retirement that we had initially planned.

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INTRODUCTION

Located on the inner-west wall of the nave of the Romanesque abbey-church of Sainte-Marie at Souillac, France, are a number of reliefs generally said to date to the period c.1120 to c.1140 *[fig.1]*. Until recently, those sculptures were considered by historians to be the fragmentary remains of an exterior portal program that had been set originally on the west end of the church, fragments that were moved into the nave of the church after the west end sustained heavy damage during the Religious Wars of the latter-half of the sixteenth century. Archaeological evidence discovered in the middle of the twentieth century has now cast doubt on the original setting for the sculptures. Recent opinion suggests that they may never have been on the exterior of the church, but rather that they were located from the outset within an old Carolingian tower-porch at the west end of the church, facing into the porch rather than into the nave.

It is my thesis that the group of sculptures now on the inner-west wall should not be regarded as the fragmentary remains of a larger and unknowable whole. Whatever setting or settings may originally have been intended for the various sculptures within the group, the existing ensemble forms a cohesive, fully-integrated and highly sophisticated iconographic program, a meaningful whole that comments from a monastic perspective

on many of the important issues facing the Western Church in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries.

I propose to submit the sculptures to a close visual analysis in order to begin to decode their levels of meaning for a literate monastic audience. I will seek to reveal meaning largely through the internal logic of the images themselves, informed by the context in which the images were originally intended to function, namely within the literate environment of reformed Benedictine monasticism, in the south of France, in the early-twelfth century. Relevant comparative textual and artistic material will be considered.

The reading of the sculptures here proposed does not purport to be complete. In this paper, I intend to pursue the issue of the meaning of individual panels for the primary purpose of connecting the panels to one another in order to show that they form a whole. I hope to have the opportunity elsewhere to develop much more fully the issue of meaning of both the individual panels and the program. Any consideration of the broader historical and art-historical significance of the sculptures will be deferred until that further investigation is more complete.

Nothing suggests that reception of the sculptures in their original setting would have been strictly limited to the monks of the abbey. The program, however, has been designed in such a manner as to permit the individual components to be read and appreciated on different levels, reserving to the literate monks alone readings that might impair regard for the Church. How this was accomplished will be demonstrated during this course of this paper.

There are aspects of the art at Souillac that are particularly difficult to decipher, panels that consist almost entirely of highly-complex animal symbolism. Allen Borg, writing about a detailed symbolic interpretation given to the Hildesheim candlesticks, stated, "*[i]*t is of the sort which makes the average medievalist reach for a gun (or at least a halberd)"[1] At Souillac, the designer has taken steps to help the literate viewer make it through the program without having to reach for a gun. The program can be entered through either of two relatively accessible reliefs, each reflecting a narrative which, in the early-twelfth century, would have been familiar to and readily identifiable by a monastic audience - the Theophilus legend and the story of the Sacrifice of Abraham, each of which will be set out in some detail later in this paper. The latter at least, and probably the former, would also have been identifiable by an informed lay audience. At Souillac, each of those narratives is depicted in a straight-forward and easily-read manner and could have been appreciated on the narrative level alone. In respect of each, however, the designer departs somewhat from that which would have been expected by the literate monk of the day. By those departures, and by the inclusion of other subtle visual clues, the designer turns the reading of the program for the literate monastic viewer in unexpected directions. Once the directional turns are taken, other connections reveal themselves and it becomes possible to follow the art through the various components of the program. The unexpected paths through which the art leads the viewer ultimately arrive at scenes of complex symbolism. However, by the time the literate viewer arrives at those scenes, he

[1] Borg, 92.

or she will be seen to have been given the necessary tools to facilitate a decoding of the meaning.

I will begin the exploration of the art at Souillac with a brief historical overview of the abbey-church, confining myself to matters that may have a bearing on the issues under discussion in this paper, followed by a selective historiography of the sculptures now on the west wall of the nave. That historiography, in addition to setting out the approaches of historians over the years, helps to bring out the areas in which the sculptures depart from the expected, thereby facilitating the analysis that is to follow.

In the following chapters, I will enter the artwork itself, commencing with an analysis of the Theophilus relief. I have chosen to begin with the Theophilus relief for purely pragmatic reasons - the twelfth-century understanding of the Theophilus legend in France can be known with a degree of confidence; the relief has been studied by numerous historians over the years and many of its irregularities have been repeatedly identified, although not satisfactorily explained; and the subject matter of the relief appears, at least on first examination, to be reasonably self-contained. I will then turn to the left face of the trumeau, with its depiction of the Sacrifice of Abraham. While the understanding of the biblical event in twelfth-century France was not as fixed as was the understanding of the Theophilus legend, the biblical account is known, the historical and art-historical understandings of the biblical event by Christians have been well studied and there are a number of Romanesque sculptural comparators, proximate in time and location to Souillac, against which the version at Souillac can be considered. Thereafter, it becomes

necessary to leave the realm of known narratives and to attempt to determine the meaning of the balance of the program based largely on its internal logic, following the visual connections provided by the design of the program.

CHAPTER I - HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

1.1 Historical Overview

The abbey church at Souillac is located at the confluence of the Dordogne and the Borrèze rivers (region of Quercy), in the small town of Souillac, which was, at the times relevant to this paper, within the diocese of the bishop of Cahors. The abbey church is a single-nave, Latin-cross, church with a transept. The east end of the church consists of an apse with three radiating chapels. The nave comprises two large bays, each of which is crowned by a dome on pendentives, as is the crossing. Although domed churches were unusual in southern France in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries, the domes at Souillac are not unique. Within the region of Quercy, the cathedral at Cahors and the abbey church at Moissac both displayed similar domes on pendentives. [2] Each projecting arm of the transept at Souillac contains an oriented chapel. The roof, the dome at the crossing, and the tower-porch at the west end, have all been subject to considerable restoration over the centuries. No part of the Romanesque cloister remains.[3] The only figurative sculptures on the building, other than those on the inner-west wall of the nave, are four historiated capitals set at the top of columns in the choir, capitals that have consistently been dated by historians later than the program on the west end and that have no apparent connection to the sculptures in the west end.

[2] I insert this information because, iconographically, this is an architectural element that may assume importance.

[3] Certain seventeenth-century claustral buildings still stand to the south of the abbey church.

Historians and archaeologists have, almost from the outset of the study of the sculptures at Souillac, placed the sculptures now set on the interior west wall at Souillac, together with the exterior portal programs at Moissac and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, within that first generation of great Languedocian portals from the first half of the twelfth century. The sculptures at Souillac have traditionally been considered to date between c. 1120 and c. 1140 and are said to follow very shortly after the portal program at Moissac *[fig.2]* (located approximately 130 km south of Souillac) and to be roughly contemporaneous with the portal sculptures at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne *[fig.3]* (located approximately 50 km east of Souillac).[4] Recent scholarship suggests that the portal program at Moissac may have been created between c. 1100 and 1115, rather than between 1115 and c. 1130 as was originally thought.[5] Because the dates for Souillac and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne are based upon the dates ascribed to the portal at Moissac, the scholarship on the Moissac portal has implications for the dating of the sculptural program at Souillac.

Almost nothing is known about the earliest days of the abbey at Souillac. No early documents mention the building of the church or the creation of its sculptural program.[6] The first clear reference to the physical presence of a group of monks at Souillac is to be found in papal notes from the years 1155 to 1158 which mention the existence of a longstanding dispute between the monks of Souillac and those of Saint-Pierre at Aurillac. Aurillac is located approximately 100 km to the east of Souillac. Those papal notes give

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[4] Hearn, 169-171.

[5] Forsyth, "The Date of the Moissac Portal", 77. .

[6] Certain wills from the tenth century exist in which bequests are made of property, or interests in property, located at or near Souillac, to the monks of the abbey of Saint-Pierre at Aurillac. Those bequest may point to the existence at that time of a community of monks at Souillac which falls under the control of the abbot at Aurillac. For more on these wills and their authenticity see H. Pradalier, 31-32.

no hint as to the substance of the dispute, nor do they suggest how long 'longstanding' may have been. They do state, however, that the monks at Souillac were seeking to gain independence from the abbey of Aurillac. The dispute, according to the notes, came on for decision before Pope Adrien IV in 1158 who ruled that the monks of Souillac had long been part of the abbey of Aurillac and that they owed obedience and submission to the abbot of Aurillac.[7] The documents next in time show that, in 1253, the dean of Souillac, seigneur of the town which existed around the monastery, accepted the creation of a commune after an inquiry and decision by Louis, eldest son of Louis IX. The use of the term 'dean' in that document has not been explained. The expected reference would have been 'prior'.[8] Terminology aside, however, from the foregoing it can reasonably be inferred that the monks at Souillac, during the years when the sculptural program was created, functioned as a dependency of the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Pierre at Aurillac and may, at the time, have been at odds with the mother house at Aurillac.

Information about the formation of the abbey at Aurillac, the mother house, may be relevant to an understanding of the sculptural program at Souillac. The abbey at Aurillac was established by a layman, Géraud, Count of Aurillac (ca. 855-909), about whose life something is known because his *vita* [9] was written by Odo of Cluny (d. 942) between 936 and 942. That *vita* was instrumental in the ultimate canonization of Géraud.[10] Odo wrote that Géraud had structured the ownership of the lands of the abbey at Aurillac in

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[7] *Monumenta Pontificia Auverniae IX - XII soeculis: Correspondance diplomatique des papes*, 246-7. Independence by Souillac from Aurillac was not obtained until sometime between the years 1475 and 1508.
[8] For one attempt to explain the use of the term 'dean', see Pradalier, 31-2.
[9] Odo of Cluny, *St. Gerald of Aurillac by St. Odo*, 89-180.
[10] Like the lives of most saints, the *vita* must be treated with caution.

such a way as to vest ownership directly in the Holy See, thereby putting the lands out of reach of Géraud's own descendants, thus guaranteeing the future freedom of the abbey from lay interference and providing an ongoing independent income for the abbey. During the so-called 'Investiture Contest' of the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries, the independence from lay authority that had earlier been gained by monastic establishments such as that at Aurillac helped to influence reforming popes, a monastic influence that I expect to show is reflected in the Theophilus relief at Souillac.

Although Aurillac was not a Cluniac house, the relationship between Aurillac and Cluny, at least until the latter years of the tenth century, seems to have been close.[11] Not only did Odo of Cluny write the *vita* of the founder of the abbey at Aurillac, but, in the latter half of the tenth century, it was Odo himself who reformed the liturgical practices of the monastery at Aurillac along the model established at Cluny.[12]

The church building at Souillac was heavily damaged in both the Wars of Religion of the latter-half of the sixteenth century and the French Revolution of the late-eighteenth century. Documents from the seventeenth century show that substantial and expensive restorations were undertaken by the abbot of Souillac between the years 1632 and 1684. Those documents give details of the costs of the work but no particulars of what was actually done. Work seems to have taken place on the building again during the eighteenth century. The building was classed as a historic monument in 1841 and restoration has taken place on it from time to time thereafter. It was not until 1948, when

[11] I do not have any information about the relationship between Cluny and Aurillac after the tenth century.
[12] For more on Odo of Cluny and Géraud of Aurillac, see Rosenwein, 72-83.

work began on and beneath the then-crumbling old Carolingian tower porch that formed the west end of the church that some detailed and reliable archaeological information about the history of the west end of the church became known.[13] Excavations beneath the tower porch disclosed that there had been substantial renovations to the west end of the building in the seventeenth century and permitted a more accurate understanding of the west end of the church as it stood in the twelfth century when the sculptures now on the inside of the nave were created. That understanding of the west end in turn permitted a reconsideration of earlier assumptions relating to the exterior west-portal at Souillac and its ability to support a sculptural program on the scale of Moissac and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne.[14] This aspect of the history of the building will be more fully developed in the historiography of the sculptural program that follows, through the overview of the works of Dr. Cany and Régis Labourdette.

1.2 Historiographical Overview of the Sculptures

There have been very few general works on Romanesque sculpture since the late-nineteenth century that have not included at least a paragraph or two on the sculptures at Souillac, almost invariably accompanied by photographs of the figure of Isaiah and the front face of the trumeau. It is not possible within the confines of this paper - and would not be productive - to review those various general works. I will confine myself to a brief, sometimes critical, overview of the most significant archaeological and art-

[13] Cany and Labrousse, 389-404.
[14] Pradalier, 481-483. The general scarcity of early documentation relating to the abbey at Souillac is attributed to the fact that the abbey was taken and retaken during the Religious Wars because of its important strategic location at the intersection of the two rivers.

historical studies of Souillac and its sculptures, the approaches employed by the scholars, and the broad conclusions that were reached by them. I will also refer to certain general works on the Romanesque that have contributed to the understanding of, or approaches to, the sculptures. Discussion of the actual details of many of the studies will be reserved to points in my own analysis where their significance can be better appreciated.

By way of general background against which the more particularized historiography can be set, the existence of a connection between the large, sculpted trumeau at Souillac *[fig.1]* and the great trumeaux on the exterior portals of the nearby Romanesque abbey churches at Moissac *[fig.2]* and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne *[fig.3]* has long been accepted.[15] Early historians of the French Romanesque knew that the church at Souillac had been seriously damaged during the Religious Wars and that, as a result, extensive changes to the west end of the church were undertaken in the seventeenth century, although, until the middle of the twentieth century, the particulars of those changes were not known. It was a short but reasonable step for those early historians to conclude that the sculptures now inside the nave comprise the fragmentary remains of an exterior portal program similar to those at Moissac and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, fragments that had been moved to their present location within the church as part of that seventeenth-century restoration. The basic conclusion that the sculptures were the fragmentary remains of an exterior portal program went unchallenged until the mid-1980s. In 1981, for example, M.F. Hearn, in his excellent general work on Romanesque sculpture, wrote comfortably that the

[15] Thirion, 167.

sculptures at Souillac, together with the portals of Moissac and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, formed the "first generation of great Languedocian portals".[16]

At each of Moissac *[fig.2]* and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne *[fig.3]*, the trumeau supported a large, richly-carved tympanum that introduced complex theological subject matter related to the Ascension and the Second Coming of Christ. Other related themes were developed on or near the tympana of the two churches.[17] Once the sculptures on the interior nave-wall at Souillac came to be thought of as having originated in an exterior portal program (and there is no suggestion of any early opposition to that characterization), historians began to attempt to fit the various sculptures at Souillac into the exterior-portal model. That fit, as will be seen, was not an easy one.

Early historians also turned their efforts to identifying the iconography of the panels that did exist. Alfred Ramé, in 1885,[18] first identified the subject matter of the large relief *[fig.4]* to be the Theophilus legend, an Eastern legend about a fallen church official who sold his soul to the devil for advancement within the church, ultimately repented and, with the aid of the Virgin, was able to obtain forgiveness. Ramé noticed that the representation of the legend at Souillac differed from the textual version in that it included a second scene between Theophilus and the devil, a scene that formed no part of the written text. Ramé suggested that the second scene represented the devil coming to

[16] Hearn, 169-171.
[17] Hearn, 172.
[18] Ramé, 225-232. According to Ramé, the legend was no longer known at the end of the nineteenth century.

claim the soul of Theophilus.[19] Ramé identified the two seated-saints framing the narrative component of the relief as St. Peter on the right and, on the left, St. Benedict, St. Paul or St. Martin, the patron saint of the parish. Ramé could not account for the presence of the seated saints and dismissed them as *"hors-d'oeuvres"* unrelated to the narrative.[20] He remarked that, unusually for Romanesque art, only one of the reliefs, the one on the left side of the trumeau *[fig.5]*, appeared to represent a biblical story, the story of the Sacrifice of Abraham. The figures of Isaiah *[fig.6]* and Joseph *[fig.7]*, flanking the main entrance door, were identifiable because the sculptor had carved their names into the relief. Ramé wrote that they had been included in the program because, in a church dedicated to the Virgin, Joseph was significant as the protector of the Virgin and Isaiah was the prophet of the virgin birth.[21] The front face of the trumeau was seen by Ramé to represent the Descent to Hell *[fig.8]*.[22] The remaining sculptures were admired for their design but there was no consideration given to the thought that they might have meaning. There is much in that early work of Ramé that has stood the test of time.

Émile Mâle, in 1922, in a general work on twelfth-century religious iconography, also turned his attention to the sculptures at Souillac.[23] Mâle's earlier works had dealt with the iconography of thirteenth-century French art. That, unfortunately, had the result of casting a backwards shadow over Mâle's consideration of the Theophilus relief. In the thirteenth century, the Theophilus legend appears in French monumental art, particularly

[19] Ramé, 229.
[20] Ramé, 229.
[21] Ramé, 230-31.
[22] Ramé, 230.
[23] Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Twelfth Century*, 436-7.

in stained glass, as a vehicle to promote the cult of the Virgin.[24] The only known monumental presentation of the legend from the twelfth-century is that at Souillac. Mâle wrote that the Theophilus relief at Souillac *[fig.9]* represented "one of the most famous miracles of Notre Dame", and that the presence of the Virgin on the tympanum, not accompanied by her son, "honor*[ed] [the Virgin]* for herself"[25]. In fact, as later historians would observe, while the Virgin is represented without her son at Souillac, she is difficult to distinguish from the angels, is no more prominent than the angels and is considerably less prominent than either the devil or the errant human being. Mâle, in his desire to introduce the thirteenth century representations of the legend in art, did not appear to recognize that the designer at Souillac had actually devalued the role of the Virgin from the manner in which it was understood in the text of the twelfth century.

Mâle, who sought to find textual sources for French Romanesque art, also pronounced that the trumeau at Souillac *[fig.8]* was a copy of a canon table from a manuscript which was itself an imitation of Gospel canons from Syrian manuscripts reviving ancient Eastern traditions.[26] Mâle's certainty that the animal sculptures at Souillac reflected Eastern manuscript art had the effect of relegating much of the sculpture at Souillac to the realm of the decorative, removing from it the possibility that it was intended to convey meaning.

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[24] A thirteenth century sculpture of the legend appears on the exterior of the north portal of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris.
[25] Mâle. *Religious Art in France: The Twelfth Century*, 436.
[26] Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Twelfth Century*, 20-22.

Mâle, however, did make a significant and lasting contribution to the understanding of that extra scene in the Theophilus narrative that had been noted by Ramé. In that second meeting between Theophilus and the devil, the head of Theophilus is bowed slightly before the devil, the knees of Theophilus are bent slightly and Theophilus does not make eye contact with the devil. Theophilus extends his hands together toward the devil and the devil clasps both of Theophilus' hands in his own hands *[fig.10]*. Mâle identified the gesture involved as being the ritual hand-clasp of feudal homage, an identification that has been fully accepted.

In 1936, Raymond Rey, who wrote extensively on the art and architecture in the south of France, authored a text on Romanesque sculpture in Languedoc. Rey's analysis of the sculptures at Souillac is somewhat difficult to comment on because he gives no reasons for many of his assertions beyond the fact of his own conviction. He largely echoes Mâle. He does unequivocally state, however, that the Theophilus relief *[fig.4]*, which he calls a pseudo-tympanum, was originally located on the exterior of the church over the main entrance door in the position ordinarily assigned to Christ in Majesty. He challenges Ramé's assertion that the front face of the trumeau *[fig.8]* represents the path to hell. He disputes Ramé's conclusion that the standing figure of Joseph *[fig.7]* represents the husband of the Virgin. Rather, Rey suggests that it represents the prophet Hosea, opposing Hosea, the chief of the minor-prophets, to Isaiah, the chief of the major-prophets.[27]

[27] Rey, 248-256.

In 1939, Meyer Schapiro conducted a detailed formal study of the sculptures at Souillac[28] and concluded that, formally, the various components present as a unified, coherent and deliberate whole, a conclusion that has not been challenged. In the course of arriving at that conclusion, Schapiro made numerous observations about the sculptures that also have not been challenged. Schapiro's Marxist approach to medieval art saw the traditional Church-establishment in opposition to rising artistic freedom. For Schapiro, the placement of the Theophilus relief in the position of honour over the main door of the church, centralizing the tale of an errant church official and moving the seated saints to the sides, supported his position that the sculptures at Souillac reflected a devaluation of the transcendent *[fig.4]*. In its disregard of issues of sponsorship and reception, Schapiro's ultimate conclusion about the devaluation of the transcendent in religious sculpture has not stood the test of time. His formal observations, however, have. Schapiro's keen eye for formal detail has been invaluable to my efforts and I will turn frequently to those observations. Some thirty-years later, in 1967, Schapiro delivered, at Harvard University, a series of lectures on Romanesque architectural sculpture, lectures which, in 2006, were finally edited and published.[29] In the course of those lectures, Schapiro frequently returned his attention to the sculptures at Souillac, and perhaps because he was not then tied to the application of any particular methodology, he allowed himself greater latitude to comment on his observations. His observations in 1967, particularly in respect of the scene of the Sacrifice of Abraham, have been helpful.

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[28] Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac", 102-130.
[29] Schapiro, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture.*

In 1951, Dr. G. Cany, an archaeologist with the French government, published a brief but very significant article in the *Bulletin Monumental* about some restorative work that had been undertaken in 1948 to deal with structural problems in and under the tower porch at Souillac.[30] In the course of that restorative work, the extent of the seventeenth-century renovations to the tower porch on the west end of the building finally became known. A ground plan was published by Dr. Cany showing the floor of the tower-porch as it stood in the ninth and tenth centuries, the twelfth-century changes, and the seventeenth-century changes to the interior west end of the church and the tower porch. That plan, unfortunately, could not show where the sculptures had been set prior to the work in the seventeenth century, but sufficient information became available about the dimensions of the west end at the time that the sculptural program was created to permit archaeologists ultimately to re-evaluate many of the earlier ideas about the original location of the sculptural program.[31] 'Ultimately' did not happen until 1984.

In a general work from 1959 relating to the Romanesque sculptures of the region of Quercy, Margaret Vidal, Jean Maury and Jean Porcher maintained, without reference to the implications of Dr. Cany's work, that the sculptures at Souillac were fragments of a work originally located on the exterior portal of the church and that deviations from the stylistic norm, particularly visible in the Theophilus relief *[fig.4]* and in the descent of the angel and ram in the scene of the Sacrifice of Abraham *[fig.5]*, were the result of

[30] Cany and Labrousse, 389-397.
[31] Dr. Cany's article is not available on-line. However, his plan is reproduced by Labourdette, and can thereby be accessed.

uneven workmanship.[32] The deviations from the stylistic norm noted by Vidal have helped to reveal the internal logic of the program.

In 1979, the archaeologist Jacques Thirion returned attention to the sculptures at Souillac, in particular to the Theophilus relief *[fig.4]*.[33] Thirion acknowledged being troubled by Schapiro's 1939 observation that the devil and the cleric appeared to overshadow the Virgin. He did not challenge the validity of the observation itself. Rather, he undertook an archaeological investigation of the relief to attempt to show that the relief, as it now stands, is a patched-up composition, probably created when the sculptures were moved into the nave. Thirion's study in fact forced him to conclude the opposite, that the relief as it now stands probably reflects the original design.[34] That conclusion has not subsequently been challenged. I will accordingly treat the Theophilus relief as reflecting that original design. At the end of his paper, Thirion concluded that the Theophilus relief had not formed a tympanum and had been intended for placement on a lateral wall of the portal. The irregularities to which Thirion looked in the course of his unsuccessful efforts to prove that the Theophilus relief was not original in its design help to identify areas in which the relief formally deviates from the expected.

In 1984, the archaeologist Régis Labourdette responded to Thirion's work, in particular to the suggestion that the Theophilus relief had been intended for placement on a lateral

[32] Vidal *et al*, 327-329.
[33] Thirion, 161-172.
[34] Thirion's study did not permit him to examine the relief from scaffolding. He states that, had he been able to do so, there is a possibility that his conclusion might be different.

wall of the portal.[35] Referring to the materials that based the report of Dr. Cany, Labourdette noted that the west-wall of the nave on which the sculptures are now set did not exist in the twelfth century. The exterior walls of the then-existing Carolingian tower-porch were never large enough to support a portal-program on the scale of Moissac and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, the scale suggested by the trumeau now in the interior of the nave. There was no door on the Carolingian tower-porch that could have contained a trumeau on the scale of the one now located in the nave. A physical observation of the sculptures themselves, including the trumeau, established that they appear not to have been exposed to the elements. Labourdette concluded that all the sculptures, including the trumeau, had been set elsewhere in the interior before being moved to their present location in the nave in the course of the seventeenth-century restorations.

Labourdette agreed with earlier historians that, based on the presence of the trumeau, a new west end for the abbey church at Souillac must have been planned in the twelfth-century, a west end which was intended to support an exterior portal-program on the scale of those at Moissac and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. He concluded that, for reasons that are no longer known, the portal project was abandoned before it was implemented. According to Labourdette, the trumeau itself is the only sculpture that can be said with reasonable certainty to have been created with the intention that it would form part of an exterior portal program *[fig.8]*. The only interior location in which all the sculptures now inside the nave could have been set before being moved into the nave is on the interior wall of the old Carolingian tower-porch. The Theophilus relief *[fig.4]*, in particular, is

[35] Labourdette. 29-35.

far too wide relative to its height to have ever been intended for the side-wall of an exterior Romanesque portal program and there is nothing to suggest that it was ever designed to be part of an exterior program. The Theophilus relief shows none of the signs of wear consistent with having spent the first five-hundred years of its life at eye-level anywhere. The only place above eye-level within the interior of the tower-porch that could have supported a relief on the scale of the Theophilus relief was the location above the main entrance to the nave. Therefore, according to Labourdette, it is probable that the Theophilus relief was created for placement within that tower-porch, facing into the tower-porch, over the main entrance door to the nave.

The placement suggested by Labourdette for the Theophilus relief would correspond to the present placement of a large late-twelfth century bas-relief that is situated in the remains of the Carolingian tower-porch, over the entrance to the nave, on the nearby parish church of St. Martin at Souillac *[fig. 11]*.

In 1989, Henri Pradalier published a paper on the abbey-church at Souillac, adding little that was new insofar as the sculptural program on the west face of the nave is concerned but conveniently bringing together in one source the archaeology and early history of the church, so far as it is known. Pradalier's paper develops considerably the published history of the church from the sixteenth century onward and adds to the published work on the domes and the decoration of the transept and choir.[36]

[36] Pradalier, 481-508.

In 1990, Michael Camille delivered a paper that asserted that art historians, seeking to determine the meaning of medieval images, have unduly limited themselves to written models of interpretation.[37] In the course of the article, he makes mention of the half-naked wrestlers on the right face of the trumeau at Souillac *[fig.12]* and questions whether the embrace of the older and younger males might reflect current concerns against "the unmentionable vice" in the dormitories of monasteries. He did not purport to answer that question.

In 1992, Carol Knicely presented a dissertation on the topic of the sculptures at Souillac which was followed by a journal article in 1998.[38] Freed by the writings of Labourdette from the necessity of attempting to deal with the Theophilus relief as a Romanesque tympanum and the other sculptures as parts of an exterior portal program connected to that tympanum, Knicely was able to reconsider the whole. Largely because the Theophilus legend came to be used in the thirteenth century to promote the cult of the Virgin, Knicely concluded in her dissertation that the sculptures at Souillac were intended from the outset to encourage pilgrimage. The evidence upon which she bases that conclusion is very weak. In her later journal article, she does not address the motive of pilgrimage but does stress lay sponsorship and attempts to relate lay sponsorship to the violence depicted on the front face of the trumeau. Knicely, like Schapiro before her, turned to social history to seek explanations for the sculptures. Her attempt to arrive at a meaning for the program without reference to the centrality of theological and

[37] Camille, "Mouths and Meanings", 50.
[38] Knicely, *Decorative Violence and Narrative Intrigue*, 39-44, and "Food for Thought", 17.

ecclesiological content minimizes the overriding influence of monastic sponsorship and reception and in my opinion weakens her overall conclusions. Knicely, like Schapiro before her, made a number of significant observations about the details of the sculptures, particularly in respect of the Theophilus relief. I will discuss those observations at relevant points within the body of this paper.

The final major studies of the sculptural fragments at Souillac are those of Jérôme Baschet. In 2008, Baschet presented a book on medieval iconography in which he dealt with three categories of medieval art - wall painting, portal sculptures and illumination. Of the two portal sculptures referenced in that work, one was that at Souillac.[39] In 2010, Baschet presented an article in English very similar to that component of the 2008 book that discussed the Souillac sculptures.[40] Baschet's methodology involves what he terms a search for an elementary geometric-vocabulary, a methodology closely identified with semiotic theory. His stated object is to find a 'generic signification' appropriate to the overall coherence of an ensemble that could "lay the common groundwork for more specific and multifarious meanings'.[41] His focus in respect of the sculptures at Souillac is on the trumeau *[fig.8]* and, to a lesser degree, on the Theophilus relief *[fig.4]*. Baschet finds, within the sculptures at Souillac, an association that is always negative in the horizontal, one that is either negative or positive in the vertical depending on the context, and one that he describes as "ambivalent" in the use of crossed forms.[42] I have found

[39] Baschet. *L'iconographie médiévale*, 188-210.
[40] Baschet, "Iconography beyond Iconography", 23-47.
[41] Baschet, "Iconography beyond Iconography", 23.
[42] Baschet. *L'iconographie médiévale* , 225.

Baschet's geometric vocabulary to be a helpful tool for analysis and have used it, with caution, as a check against which to consider my own observations. Baschet has noticed certain details on the trumeau that have been extremely important to my reading.

CHAPTER II - THE THEOPHILUS RELIEF

2.1 Introduction and Approach

Set directly above the main entrance door to the nave of the church at Souillac is a large relief, the narrative component of which has been firmly identified to represent the legend of Theophilus *[fig.9]*. The legend, however, does not account fully for the relief. The relief differs in some important respects from the legend as it was understood in France in the early-twelfth century. It also differs formally from that which was expected at the time.

The sculptures at Souillac were created at or near the end of what has come to be known as the 'Investiture Contest'.[43] Initiatives had been taken by the reform papacy from the middle of the eleventh century forward to attempt to eliminate first, simony, and then, lay interference in ecclesiastical appointment and property. Efforts to eliminate lay involvement in ecclesiastical appointment and property were at the heart of that contest over investiture. I propose to show that the designer of the sculptures at Souillac used the Theophilus legend as a vehicle to comment on those reforming initiatives. If the relief is reconsidered in the context of those efforts at reform, rather than simply as an artistic representation of the legend, most of the features of the relief that have troubled scholars over the years fall into place.

[43] I have here accepted the date of the Concordat of Worms, 1122, to mark the end of the Investiture Contest.

I will begin this part by showing how the Theophilus legend was understood in France in the early-twelfth century. It will then be possible to show in what ways the relief departs from the legend and how, formally, it deviates from the expected. Many of those departures and deviations will be established in the course of the historiography of the relief that forms part of this chapter. Finally, I will set the relief in the context of the dispute between Church and state over control of ecclesiastic appointments and property and will show that, read in that context, almost all of the difficulties that the relief has posed are resolved. The irregularities and deviations that have troubled scholars in fact become the key to an understanding of the relief. Those few irregularities that remain unresolved will be noted.

2.2 The Legend in Text and Art

The legend of Theophilus is of Eastern origin. The tale was first introduced to the West in the ninth century by Paul, the Deacon of Naples.[44] Paul, the Deacon of Naples, was a ninth-century hagiographer working in Naples who developed a particular interest in Byzantine narratives that related to the role of the Virgin and the significance of penitence. To that end, he translated into Latin certain works that were formerly available only in Greek, including the Theophilus legend, and sent copies of those translations back to the West.[45] According to the version of the legend sent to the West by Paul, the Deacon of Naples, Theophilus, a *vicedominus (vidame*) to the bishop of

[44] Paul the Deacon of Naples, 483-487. Paul the Deacon of Naples who is responsible for bringing the Theophilus legend to the West should not be confused with the eighth-century historian Paul the Deacon.
[45] Boyarin, 44-46.

Adana in Cilicia, was a well-regarded, pious and charitable man. On the death of the bishop, Theophilus was chosen to succeed him. Out of humility, Theophilus declined. Another bishop was appointed who, shortly thereafter, dismissed Theophilus. Theophilus became embittered and turned for help to a Jew who offered to introduce him to the devil. The Jew told Theophilus to come back the next night if he still wished to proceed. Theophilus returned the next night, at which time the Jew took Theophilus to a meeting with the devil, a meeting that occurred at midnight in the forum of the city. There, through the medium of the Jew, Theophilus and the devil concluded an agreement. Under the pact, the devil required Theophilus to renounce Christ and the Virgin, and the devil in turn promised to restore Theophilus to his former position and power. The agreement was put into writing, and Theophilus affixed his seal without hesitation. Almost immediately, the devil more than fulfilled his end of the bargain. Theophilus was restored to his former position and went on to experience greater wealth and power than ever before. In time, however, he began to regret what he had done and to fear for his soul. He accordingly went to a church where the powers of the Virgin were particularly strong and prostrated himself on the ground in front of the church for forty days, praying, fasting and begging the Virgin for her help. In due course, the Virgin appeared. Initially, because of the seriousness of his wrong, the Virgin refused to help. However, on seeing the sincerity of his repentance, she agreed to speak to her son on behalf of Theophilus. Three days later, she returned to assure Theophilus that he had been forgiven. Theophilus remained concerned about the agreement to which he had bound himself. The Virgin accordingly recovered the signed agreement from the devil and placed it on

the chest of Theophilus as he slept in front of the church. Theophilus then went to his bishop, confessed all that had happened and took communion. The bishop, using Theophilus as an example, delivered a sermon on the virtues of penitence and the mercy and mediatory powers of the Virgin. The congregation embraced Theophilus. Theophilus then returned to the church before which he had repented, lay in prayer to the Virgin, and three days later died. His soul was delivered up to God.[46]

The first record of the legend being taken up in the West is a poem by the tenth-century German abbess, Hrotsvita of Gandersheim. Her poem largely follows the account of Paul the Deacon.[47] In England, a reference to the legend first appears in the late-tenth or early-eleventh century in the form of a very brief summary in the vernacular by the monk Aelfrid in a homily to stress the mercy and miraculous abilities of the Virgin.[48] By the early-eleventh century, the legend is said to have been well-known in England and in post-Conquest England it was included in collections of Miracles of the Virgin.[49]

The spread of the legend in France in the eleventh century is attributed to a well-circulated *exemplum* on the Nativity of the Virgin written by Fulbert, Bishop of Chartres (d. 1028 or 1029).[50] Fulbert's text refers to a number of miracles of the Virgin,

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[46] Paul the Deacon of Naples, 483-487.
[47] Hrotsvita of Gandersheim, *PL,* 137:1101-1110.
[48] Boyarin, 47.
[49] Boyarin, 45. I have not included the details of the legend as it became known in England during the tenth through the twelfth centuries. In England, during those centuries, the role of the Jew became central. His influence on Theophilus was controlling. Boyarin explains that the legend developed differently in England from elsewhere because of a strong anti-Semitic sentiment generally current in England in the tenth and eleventh century. As will be seen, the role of the Jew is not stressed in France in the art or text of the eleventh and early-twelfth centuries.
[50] Cothren, 309-11.

including the miracle of Theophilus.[51] The Theophilus narrative, distinct from the other miracles referred to in Fulbert's text, is set out in full. Based upon that, it is reasonable to conclude that, at the time of Fulbert's text, the legend was not well-known in France. Fulbert's *exemplum* would have brought it to the attention of both monastic and secular priests. From there, knowledge of it would have spread to the laity. As conveyed by Fulbert, the story of Theophilus does not differ in substance from that of Paul, the Deacon of Naples, but it does differ markedly in emphasis. Fulbert pays little attention to the circumstances giving rise to Theophilus' decision to seek the aid of the devil or to the mechanics by which he did so. His account of the meeting between Theophilus and the devil is equally lacking in detail. The emphasis in Fulbert's account is wholly on the penitence of Theophilus and on the mercy shown by the Virgin. In his concluding chapter, Fulbert invites other sinners to come forward with Theophilus and assures them that they too, if they sincerely repent, will receive the desired pardon. It can reasonably be assumed therefore that, by the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth, literate monks in France would have been familiar with the legend. To what extent it would have been known to the laity is less certain.

A four-part poem based upon the legend is attributed to Marbod, the Bishop of Rennes (d. ca. 1076).[52] In the poem, the substance of the encounter between Theophilus and the devil follows very closely on the legend as presented by Paul the Deacon of Naples.

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[51] Fulbert of Chartres, 37.
[52] Marbod of Rennes, *PL 171: 1593-1604.*

The only known representation of the legend in Western art to precede the relief at Souillac is a historiated initial "F" contained in an eleventh-century Latin anthology of the lives of saints and homilies that is now in the possession of the Biblotheque Nationale de France in Paris.[53] In that illumination, the Virgin is enthroned with an angel to either side of her. Theophilus prays before her, begging for her help. Neither the Jew nor the devil is present in the historiated initial. In that one preceding artistic representation, as in the various textual accounts, what is of relevance is Theophilus' repentance and the mercy extended to him by the Virgin.

As France moved into the twelfth century, according to the surviving artistic and textual records, the Theophilus legend would have been known to literate monks in a way that was factually close to the original text of Paul the Deacon of Naples. Nothing suggested that there was more than one meeting between Theophilus and the devil, or that the meeting took place in or before a church, or that Theophilus, at that meeting, engaged in a ritual of homage with the devil. Finally, to the extent that emphasis was placed on any single aspect of the legend, it was not on the interaction between Theophilus and the devil but, rather, on that between Theophilus and the Virgin, stressing the efficacy of repentance and the redemptive and mediatory powers and mercy of the Virgin.

Roughly contemporaneous with the sculptures at Souillac, although perhaps slightly later in the twelfth century, the monk formerly known as Honorius of Autun, now referred to

[53] Paris, BN, MS lat. 11750, fol. 51r. As of the date of submission of this paper, I have not received a digitalized copy of that historiated initial from the BNF. A copy is reproduced in Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac", 110.

as Honorius Augustodunensis (d. 1154), included a version of the Theophilus legend in his *Speculum Ecclesiae* for delivery on the Feast of the Assumption.[54] There are differences, both factual and in emphasis, between Honorius' version of the legend and those that preceded it. In Honorius' version, the devil takes on the false appearance of an angel of light and downplays the full significance of the agreement that Theophilus is about to sign. The culpability of Theophilus may thereby have been reduced somewhat. The role of the Jew is limited to making the introduction. Despite those differences, Honorius' version retains the single meeting between Theophilus and the devil. That meeting does not take place in or adjacent to a church and there is no mention of an homage ritual. The emphasis remains clearly on the role of the Virgin.

2.3 Art-Historical Consideration of the Relief

In the course of the general historiography of sculptural program at Souillac presented in the first chapter of this paper, I noted that there were specific details observed by historians, the relevance of which would best be appreciated within the consideration of a particular component of the program. I will here set out those details that relate particularly to the Theophilus relief.

In 1885, Alfred Ramé, the first to identify the relief at Souillac as representing the legend of Theophilus, noted that the three basic components of the legend - the fall, the penitence and the pardon - were presented in four episodes *[fig. 9]*. The relief at Souillac departed from the text by showing two meetings between Theophilus and the devil rather

[54] Honorius Augustudensis, *"De Assumptione Sanctae Mariae"*, PL 172: 991-994.

than the one meeting of the text.[55] It fell to Émile Mâle to identify the second scene between Theophilus and the devil *[fig.10]*. The second scene according to Mâle represented the ritual of feudal homage:

> Once the bargain is made, Theophilus becomes Satan's 'man'. He holds out his clasped hands, as a vassal would, to his new lord who takes them in his hands. This is a scene of feudal homage taken from life.[56]

Mâle's identification of that scene has stood the test of time.

Arthur Kingsley Porter,[57] examining Romanesque sculpture from the perspective of its spread along the pilgrimage roads, remarked on the unevenness of the aesthetics of what he termed to be the fragments at Souillac. He was concerned particularly by the anomalous presence of large, seated figures on either side of the action-filled Theophilus narrative *[fig.4]*. The irregularity of the design of the relief at Souillac and the apparent unevenness of the workmanship, troubling to Porter, would continue to concern future historians. Those irregularities will be seen to aid in revealing the logic of the design.

Meyer Schapiro, in his 1939 formal study of the sculptures, observed and recorded a number of details about the Theophilus relief. I note the most significant of them here. Schapiro's observations of formal detail are extremely important to my analysis of the relief. Schapiro noted, as had others before him, that in a manner that is highly atypical of Romanesque art, at Souillac the frontal, seated saints are placed to the sides of the

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[55] Ramé. 229.
[56] Mâle. *Religious Art of the Twelfth Century*. 436.
[57] Porter, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads,* Vol. 1, 198-199.

relief, while the active, profiled figures are in the centre *[fig.4]*.[58] Also, Schapiro remarked on the fact that, atypically, the figures in the relief grow smaller as they approach the top of the relief, a feature that is further compounded by the distance of the viewer from the relief. The largest, most significant figures in the relief, the figures of Theophilus and the devil, are at the base.[59] Although the three components of the relief - the two seated saints and the Theophilus narrative - are set beneath a three-part arch, the overall effect is asymmetrical. The monastic saint to the left is centered in the space under the left arch. The Theophilus narrative is centered in the space under the central arch. The seated figure of St. Peter to the right, however, is not centered under the right arch. To the contrary, it is set to the extreme right of the space defined by the right arch.[60] The composition of the central field is also not symmetrical. The two pairings of the devil and Theophilus are not given equal space. The second pair depicting the gesture of homage, that which does not reflect the legend, is given greater space than is the first pair, the one that more closely does.[61] The four heavenly figures (three angels and the Virgin) descending from the clouds create what Schapiro calls a 'discoordinate' arrangement. One angel descends from the clouds within the left arch and moves to the right, toward the central space and St. Peter. The Virgin and a supporting angel descend from the clouds within the central space and move toward the left side of the central space, toward the penitent/sleeping Theophilus. The final angel descends from the clouds under the right arch, but rather than moving toward the central space as would be

[58] Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac", 103.
[59] Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac", 117.
[60] Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac", 102.
[61] Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac", 103.

expected in order to balance the direction taken by the angel descending from above the monastic saint, the angel on the right descends toward the right, toward the head of Peter.[62] Formally, St. Peter *[fig.13]* and the monastic saint *[fig.14]* are noticeably different. Peter's overall appearance is described by Schapiro as being skeletal, tense and rigid, while that of the monastic saint is more relaxed, broader and more stable. Even the beasts beneath the feet of the two saints reflect the formal differences in the appearance of the two.[63] The devil in the two scenes is different. Not only are the heads of the devils significantly different from one another, but the feet of the two are also different. In the second scene, the devil's two feet are different from one another *[fig.10]*.[64]

In 1959, Margaret Vidal *et al,* asserting that the irregularities in the Theophilus relief were the result of uneven workmanship, described the framing seated-saints to be "seated in majesty" and identified them as St. Peter by the keys *[fig.13]* and St. Benedict *[fig.14]* by the cross and book of the holy order. The identification of St. Peter by the keys has never been in issue. Uncertainty has continued to accompany the identification of the monastic saint. For the first time, the identities of the creatures beneath the feet of the seated saints were considered. They are said by Vidal *et al,* without explanation, to be the asp and the basilisk of the *Psalm.*[65]

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[62] Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac", 104-106.
[63] Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac", 107-08.
[64] Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac", 109-111.
[65] Vidal et al., 327. No explanation is given by Vidal for her assertion. *Psalm 91:13,* which is presumably the *Psalm* of which she writes, being a praise of a canticle for David, states, "Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk: and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon."

In 1992, Carol Knicely made certain observations regarding the Theophilus relief that will be significant to my discussion of meaning. She noted that the second scene between Theophilus and the devil takes place in a different setting from the first, in an architectural setting *[fig. 9]*.[66] Knicely is the first to comment on the clothing worn by Theophilus. He is described by Knicely to be dressed in both scenes as a well-to-do layman. She remarked on the presence of the cloister on the church building in the Theophilus relief, a detail that could tend to identify the church as being a monastic church. She also remarked on the presence of the circular discs in the relief. The importance of documents and holy books to the entire scene is commented upon by Knicely. The saints and the angels all hold texts, some documentary, some books. The only scene which is without written documents of some sort is the second scene between Theophilus and the devil.[67]

Jérôme Baschet, although his focus was principally on the trumeau, also considered the Theophilus relief *[fig. 9]* and made some important observations about it. The vertical column between Theophilus and the devil in the second scene takes the eyes upward to the church.[68] The two seated-saints (together with the Virgin) represent the institutional Church and the power of clerics, Peter on the right representing Rome *[fig.13]* and a sainted abbot on the left *[fig.14]*, not necessarily Benedict, embodying monastic authority. Baschet also considered the long-neglected monsters beneath the feet of those saints. Beneath Peter are the crossed figures of two angular, winged dragons *[fig.15]*.

[66] Knicely. *Decorative Violence,* 52.
[67] Knicely. *Decorative Violence,* 82.
[68] Baschet. *L'iconographie médiévale,* 220 - 221.

Beneath the abbot is a serpent *[fig.16]*. While commenting on their differences, Baschet did not attempt to attach specific meaning to them. He did however conclude that "the worrying animality, overloading the trumeau in such profusion, is here reduced to a more complete submission by the representatives of the authority of the church."[69]

Baschet suggests that the angel descending from heaven above the head of each of the two seated saints *[fig.4]* legitimizes the authority of the saint below in accordance with the required hierarchy of authority.[70] I disagree. The angel descending from the right arch, carrying a book that is likely the gospel, does curve toward St. Peter and could therefore be said to legitimize his authority. The angel descending from the clouds beneath the left arch, on the other hand, does not descend toward the monastic-saint beneath that arch *[fig.14]*. Rather it turns to the right as it leaves the clouds, toward the narrative scenes of the devil and Theophilus, toward the seated figure of St. Peter. Further, unlike the angel that carries a book to St. Peter, the angel descending from the left arch carries a document.

It is apparent that the narrative component of the relief not only contains a number of significant features that do not find their source in the Theophilus legend, but that it also emphasizes many of those features. Yet, other than Schapiro, Knicely, and Baschet, scholars have not questioned whether some meaning other than that which directly inheres in the legend may have been intended by the designer of the relief. Further, the

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[69] Baschet. *L'iconographie médiévale*, 224. "Mais l'animalité, dont l'inquiétante profusion surcharge le trumeau, est réduite ici à la plus complète soumission par les représentants de l'autorité cléricale".
[70] Baschet, *L'iconographie médiévale*, 224–225.

relief shows a number of significant formal anomalies and irregularities which have been commented upon in the course of the historiographical review. Other than Schapiro and Baschet, scholars have not considered that these formal anomalies and irregularities may have been intended by the designer to convey meaning. What certainly caught the attention of scholars such as Jacques Thirion and John Williams was Schapiro's undeniably valid observation that, at Souillac, visual emphasis was not on the Virgin but rather on the devil and the human, an emphasis that did not conform to the expected, either formally or in terms of the substance of the legend as it was understood in the twelfth and thirteenth century. The response by scholars to that failure to conform to the expected was, not to reconsider the singular identification of the relief with the legend, but rather to try to establish that parts of the relief were missing. When that failed, energy was directed toward demonstrating that the relief had never been a tympanum in an effort to reduce the significance of the failure of the relief to conform to the expected.

2.4 The Narrative Component Reconsidered

2.4.1 The First Scene of the Devil and Theophilus

The first scene of the devil and Theophilus *[fig.17]*, that on the left of the narrative component of the relief, along with the two scenes directly above it, has been described as reflecting the essential components of the legend - the fall, repentance and pardon of Theophilus. On closer inspection, however, it can be seen that the artist has deliberately departed in certain respects from the manner in which the legend was understood at the time of the sculptures. Theophilus is not shown in a posture of penitence, but rather is

shown to be sleeping. The most important point of departure, the visual dominance of the interaction between the devil and the errant human over the interaction between the repentant Theophilus and the Virgin has been noted repeatedly in the course of the historiography. I won't belabour it further. The legend is not here being used for the purpose to which it was ordinarily put at the time of the sculptures at Souillac.

When the interaction between the devil and Theophilus is considered in the context of the political events of the day, a reading of their dealings that is distinct from the legend begins to reveal itself. In that first scene between Theophilus and the devil *[fig.17]*, Theophilus, dressed as a wealthy layman, enters into agreement with the devil for the acquisition of high ecclesiastical office. The price paid by Theophilus to the devil in order to effect that purchase is the sale of his soul, his renunciation of his belief in Christ and the Virgin. The purchase or sale of ecclesiastical office or honour for a price constitutes simony, a term that derives from *Acts* 8:18-24. Simon Magus was a magician who offered money to the Apostles so that he too would be able to impart the Holy Ghost on those upon whom he laid his hands. The Apostle Peter told him, "Keep thy money to thyself, to perish with thee: because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." Although Simon Magus offered cash to purchase the Holy Spirit, from the earliest times the price of a simoniacal purchase was never confined to money. Gregory the Great (d. 604) distinguished three classes of simoniacal payment - (1) *munus a manu*, which comprises money, property or gift; (2) *munus a lingua*, which includes expressions of support or intercession in high places; and (3) *munus ab obsequio*

with *obsequio* including flattery, subservience, the rendering of undue services, etc.[71] In a letter written to the cardinal-bishop of Albano between 1065 and 1071, the monk Peter Damian reaffirmed those three categories of payment set forth by Gregory the Great, commenting, in respect of that third category, *obsequio,* that, while some men may pay in money for an office, others offer themselves as a price.[72] At the time of the sculptures, the purchase by Theophilus of ecclesiastical office, as portrayed at Souillac, would have been understood to constitute simony.

Eradicating simony had been central to the reforms of the Church from the beginning of the reform movement under Pope Leo IX (1049-1054). The simoniacal acquisition of church office was prohibited by the decrees of Rome, Reims and Mainz (1049).[73] It is my thesis that, in that first scene of Theophilus and the devil *[fig.17]*, the designer has taken the story of Theophilus, ordinarily used by religious leaders of the day to promote penitence and cult of the Virgin, and has adapted it to the rhetoric of reform. It is for that reason that the artistic emphasis is not on penitence or on the Virgin but rather on the dealings between Theophilus and the devil.

The Theophilus relief at Souillac was not the first use of sculpture to reflect the condemnation by the Church of the practice of simony. Elizabeth Saxon, in her recent work on the iconography of the Eucharist in Romanesque France, suggests that the attack and defeat of simony is reflected in Romanesque sculpture in depictions of the defeat of

[71] Kempf *et al*,"The Church in the Age of Feudalism", 342.
[72] Peter Damian, *Letter to the bishop cardinal Albano, PL 145:*463-466.
[73] Kempf *et al.* 354.

Simon Magus at the hands of the Apostle Peter. In Languedoc, on the Porte Miègeville at St. Sernin, Toulouse, a portal program that is traditionally dated to the end of the eleventh century or the early-twelfth century, shortly before the portal program at Moissac, Simon Magus is shown to be controlled by the Apostle Peter *[fig.18]*. [74] It is worthy of note that the angels who accompany Peter carry what has been identified as being the papal triple crown. Saxon additionally offers the opinion that the Theophilus panel at Souillac may have been intended to reflect a condemnation of simony.[75]

There was no significant opposition to the condemnation of simoniacal acquisition of church office. In fact, the emperor Henry III co-operated with Leo IX in acting to end the purchase and sale of ecclesiastical office.[76]

The unexpected emphasis on the dealings between Theophilus and the devil in that first scene is not the only point of departure in emphasis from the legend as it was understood in the early-twelfth century France. The designer has stripped away everything that might potentially detract, even in part, from the responsibility of Theophilus for the ultimate agreement. There is no reference to the grievance that caused Theophilus initially to turn to the devil. That grievance did not excuse Theophilus, but it did help to make his conduct more understandable. The mediating role of the Jew, with whatever potential that may have held to detract from some of the direct responsibility of

[74] In Burgundy, the defeat of Simon Magus by the Apostle is sculpted on two capitals in the Cathedral of St. Lazare at Autun, the dating of which is estimated to be slightly later than the estimated dates for the sculptures at Souillac.

[75] Elizabeth Saxon, *The Eucharist in Romanesque France,* 119.
[76] Robinson, "Reform and the Church", 281-2.

Theophilus, is also eliminated in the version at Souillac. Unlike the version of Honorius, nothing in the relief at Souillac suggests that Theophilus may have been mistaken about the identity of the devil. The devil is unmistakably a devil *[fig.17]*. This first scene between the devil and Theophilus introduces the consideration of the equality between individuals who jointly engage in conduct, the fact of which will become more significant when the second scene between the devil and Theophilus is considered. Theophilus and the devil are shown in that first scene to be reasonably equal in power. The height and posture of the two are similar. They face one another directly and look one another in the eye as they engage. They both point openly to the agreement that they have concluded. Notwithstanding all of that, the mercy of the Virgin ultimately remains open to Theophilus, and consistent with the legend, Theophilus is fully restored to his former rank.

2.4.2 The Second Scene of the Devil and Theophilus

As historians since Ramé have remarked, the second scene *[fig.10]* does not derive from the legend. It shows Theophilus to engage in a ritual of homage with the devil to which there is no reference in the legend. While the first scene is not placed within a discernible setting, the second is directly connected to a church building, a setting foreign to the meeting place in the legend. Further, the devils in the two scenes are markedly different from one another. Their heads and feet are different. The second scene, while it does not derive from the legend, has been shown by Schapiro to be the visually dominant scene in the narrative portion of the relief, being given more spatial-breadth than is the

first *[fig.9]*. Notwithstanding those features, and the awareness that the second scene depicts Theophilus in a gesture of feudal homage, the two scenes have been dealt with as though the second is merely a restatement of the first, albeit a restatement in the symbolic language of feudalism. The import of the two scenes, I argue, would have been understood by an early-twelfth century monastic viewer to have been fundamentally different.

It has been common ground since Mâle that the second scene in the relief at Souillac shows Theophilus and the devil in the hand clasp that is the ritual gesture of feudal homage *[fig.10]*. Even in purely secular terms, ignoring for the moment the overwhelming ecclesiological aspects of the image, the gesture of homage should not be separated from the ceremony of which it formed a part. The ritual gesture of homage (or *hominium*) was the first step in a three-step ceremony between a lord and a vassal that concluded in investiture. The second step in the ceremony was the *fealty*, the oath taken by the vassal. The third was the act of investiture itself.[77] In purely secular terms, therefore, what is depicted in the second scene between Theophilus and the devil is the commencement of a ceremony that will conclude with the devil's investing Theophilus with something. That would have been understood by a contemporary viewer.

The question of *hominium* has been discussed thus far without reference to that with which Theophilus will be invested. The ritual of *hominium* shown in the second scene between Theophilus and the devil *[fig.9]* takes place immediately before and to either

[77] Le Goff, *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages*, 241- 244.

side of a spiral column with an ornate capital, a column which is connected to and is supportive of the church above. The devil's snout almost touches the corner of the church during the ritual. The devil's eyes, as he clasps the hands of Theophilus, are not on Theophilus but on the church. The church almost sits on the head of Theophilus. The connection between the second scene of Theophilus and the devil on the one hand and the church-building on the other is visually stronger than is the connection between Theophilus and the church building in the median level. In that sleeping/repentance scene, the only visual connection between Theophilus and the devil arises because both occupy roughly the same horizontal level of the relief. The property involved in the ritual of *hominium* shown in the second meeting between Theophilus and the devil is the church with which Theophilus will be invested.

The steps taken by Leo IX to mount an active combat against simony commenced in 1049. The right of lay authority to invest with ecclesiastical property and office came to the forefront of concern for the reform papacy during the papacy of Gregory VII, resulting ultimately in a decree of the autumn Roman synod of November 19, 1078 which forbade the clergy to receive investiture from the laity. Efforts by the Church to prevent lay investiture expanded, shortly after the Roman Synod of 1078, to the prohibition of other forms of conduct connected to lay investiture. Uta-Renata Blumenthal writes that, at the Council of Clermont of 1095, with Urban II presiding and over 300 high-ranking

French clergy present, homage by priests, bishops or abbots to lay authority was banned.[78] The Lateran council in 1102 under Pascal II forbade:

> … any clerk to do homage to a layman and to receive from the hands of a layman either churches or ecclesiastical property. For this is the root of simoniacal wickedness."[79]

The concept of simony depicted in the first scene and that of lay homage and investiture depicted in the second scene were connected in the politics of the day as they are in the Theophilus relief. One was an outgrowth of the other. The papal attack on simony, begun in the middle of the eleventh century, expanded to encompass lay investiture and homage in the latter two decades of the century. In fact, according to Robinson, "Gregory *[VII]* adopted Humbert *[of Silva Candida's]* view that lay investiture constituted simony".[80] At the latest, by the Lateran council of November of 1078, the prohibition by Gregory VII against lay investiture became a matter of general knowledge within the Church:

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[78] U-R Blumenthal, *Investiture Controversy*, 140. There is no official record of the Council of Clermont. Rather, there are numerous, sometimes conflicting, summaries of what transpired at the Council. The lack of certainty is compounded by the fact that the homage ceremony, or *hominium* as it came to be called, was not named until approximately 1100. Later councils - Rouen in 1096, Poitiers in 1100 - however, confirmed the decree against homage enacted at Clermont and their records are clearer. See Blumenthal, 140. Because this major Church council took place at Clermont, in the presence of the Pope, with a large representation from the French clergy, both secular and monastic, I have assumed that the general nature of its resolutions would have been well known to the monks at Souillac.

[79] Paschal II. "*Letter to Anselm of Canterbury*" *PL* 163:*91B*. 'interdicentes, ne quis omnino clericus hominum faciat laico aut de manu laici ecclesias aut ecclesiastica bona suscipiat. Hoc est enim simoniacae pravitatis radix.'

[80] Robinson, "Reform and the Church", 304.

> … we decree that no cleric is to receive the investiture of a bishopric, an abbey or a church through the hands of an emperor, a king or other lay person, be it man or woman. If, however, he should attempt to do this, let him be informed that by apostolic authority this investiture is invalid and he himself is excommunicated until due satisfaction is done. [81]

The second scene between Theophilus and the devil *[fig.10]*, I suggest, depicts the condemned acts of homage and of lay investiture of ecclesiastical property and would have been so understood by the literate monastic viewer of the early-twelfth century.

The rationale behind the prohibition of lay investiture and lay homage has been succinctly stated by Hanna Vollrath:

> By investing a bishop … the king made it known that the church was his to give because it belonged to his realm *[and]* that its incumbent owed him fealty.[82]

The second scene between Theophilus and the devil shows the devil investing Theophilus with a church, thereby asserting that the church - and the Church - is the devil's to give, and demanding fealty from Theophilus in return.

To read the Theophilus relief in the context on the conflicts of the last-half of the eleventh and the early-twelfth centuries over the relationship between Church and state resolves most of the difficulties and irregularities noted by historians in their

[81] Decree of Nov 19 1078 from Gregory VII, *Régister,* vi, 5b, c.3 in S*elect Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* 365.
[82] Vollrath, 63.

consideration of the narrative component of the Theophilus relief. That reading offers an explanation for the focus on the devil and Theophilus rather than on repentance and the miraculous powers of the Virgin; it explains the strong connection to the church building in the second scene; it explains why the second scene is given more prominence than the first; and it explains why the Virgin presides over the first scene but not over the second. There are, however, details in the Theophilus relief that are not accounted for by this reading. The discussion relating to simony and lay investiture does not explain the bulbous domes on the roof of the church building. It does not explain the apparent presence of a cloister on the church building. It does not explain the spiral pattern on the column. It does not explain why Theophilus is apparently dressed in the clothing of the laity, particularly in the second scene, and why the ribbons on the clothes of Theophilus are differently placed in the second scene from the first. Most significantly, it does not account for the second foot of the devil. Each of those details may have meaning**.** I am unable, within the restrictions of this paper, to explore them. I hope to have the opportunity elsewhere to write on them.

2.5 The Seated Saints

Historians have been unable to integrate the seated saints into the Theophilus narrative.[83] Their iconic frontality, described by Vidal as 'seated in majesty', a form that is ordinarily associated with centrality in Romanesque sculpture, placed to either side of a narrative

[83] These difficulties stemmed in part, from concerns that the present arrangement of the seated saints within the Theophilus panel failed to reflect the original design. The study of that panel by Jacques Thirion, largely relieves those concerns.

involving the devil and an errant church official, has long troubled scholars. The saint to the right, identified as an apostle by his bare feet, has been consistently identified by historians, by virtue of the keys he holds, to represent the Apostle Peter *[fig.13]*. The identification of the saint to the left has been less consistent, but there is a consensus that he is a monastic saint *[fig.14]*. A more precise identification of the monastic saint is not possible and may not have been intended. I will show that the form and placement of the seated saints relative to one another and to the narrative is reasonable if the narrative is read in the manner I have suggested in this part.

2.5.1 St. Peter

The origin of the word 'simony', with its biblical connection to the Apostle Peter, has been discussed in the previous part. That alone would connect the Apostle Peter to the subject-matter of the narrative component of the Theophilus relief as I have read it. There is an additional connection. Within the rhetoric of reform, beginning in the late-eleventh century, the manner in which the pope described himself changed dramatically. The Apostle Peter and the pope came to be described as one and the same.[84] Some sense of the degree to which the identities of the pope and the Apostle became merged can be gleaned from the conclusion of a letter of September 1073 from Gregory VII to Duke Rudolf of Swabia:

> Wherefore we urge you to … increase your loyalty to St. Peter and to come without delay to his shrine … You will place St. Peter on both accounts so greatly

[84] Blumenthal, *Investiture Controversy*, 72.

> in debt to you that you will enjoy his intercession both in this life and in the life to come.[85]

Robinson, writing about the polemic of reform, states that "*[o]*ne characteristic theme is the pope's insistent self-identification with St. Peter."[86] Thus, any inquiry into the connection between the seated figure of St. Peter and the Theophilus relief should take into account that the seated saint may represent, not just the apostle of the bible, but also the pope, the institution of the papacy, and the Roman Church which spoke through the pope.

The asymmetric placement of St. Peter under the right arch *[figs.4, 13]*, so long troubling to scholars as an instance of uneven workmanship, makes sense, iconographically, if St. Peter is seen to represent the papacy and the Roman Church and if the second scene between Theophilus and the devil is read to refer to lay investiture. The second scene physically intrudes into the space under the arch in which St. Peter should be central just as lay investiture, within the rhetoric of reform, was seen to intrude into the jurisdiction that was properly that of the pope.

Schapiro remarked on the old, tense, skeletal appearance of the Apostle *[fig. 13]*. Whether the use of the term 'skeletal' is justified, the bearded Apostle appears old and drawn relative to his clean-shaven, baby-faced, monastic counterpart. Robinson demonstrates with numerous examples from primary sources that the rhetoric of reform paints the unreformed Church in the imagery of illness, "the reformers of the later

[85] Gregory VII, "*The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII: Selected Letters from the Régistrum*", 15-16.
[86] Robinson, *Authority and Resistance*, 19.

eleventh century gave this image a new emphasis when they represented the offences of simony and clerical marriage as diseases afflicting the body of the church."[87] The appearance of the Apostle, I suggest, reflects the ongoing dispute between the reform papacy and the lay authority, particularly but certainly not exclusively the German kings, over ownership of churches and church property and is indicative of a Church in need of reform and renewal. That the papacy was thus portrayed at the time of the sculptures at Souillac, into the twelfth century, raises additional issues that will not be explored within the confines of this paper.

2.5.2 The Monastic Saint

The narrative in the scenes at Souillac, from that first scene of Theophilus and the devil forward, reads from left to right, reflecting the temporal development of the Church's response to simony and lay investiture. I commenced this analysis of the relief with the first scene of Theophilus and the devil because that was an expedient place at which to enter the relief. By so doing, however, I by-passed the monastic saint. The presence of the monastic saint on the left side of the relief is neither extraneous nor incidental *[fig. 14]*. It is with monasticism that the fight by reformers against simony and lay investiture actually begins.

The eleventh- and twelfth- century reforming efforts of the Roman Church were preceded and heavily influenced by an earlier monastic renewal and were advanced by popes who were themselves the product of that earlier renewal and derived many of their convictions

[87] Robinson, "Reform and the Church", 270.

from it. I intend by the phrase 'monastic renewal' to refer to that period of change in the ninth-and tenth-century that emphasized, among other things, the freedom of monks to choose their own abbots and the freedom of monasteries from lay interference in the control of monastic property.[88] That monastic renewal helped to prepare the way for the reform of the Church.[89] The angel descending from the clouds above the monastic saint delivers a document not, as suggested by Baschet, to the monastic saint. Rather the angel turns to the right, toward St. Peter, carrying to St. Peter the monastic messages relating to the need of the Church for independence from interference by the laity in ecclesiastical matters. By the last half of the eleventh century, Western monasticism had come a long way toward freeing itself from lay interference, both in respect of the choice of abbots and in respect of its control over its property. Odo of Cluny, in his *vita* of Géraud of Aurillac, wrote of initiatives taken by Géraud to protect the monastery at Aurillac from lay interference.[90] Those initiatives at Aurillac helped to form the basis for Cluny's approach to obtaining that freedom from lay interference for its own affiliated houses.

At the time of the sculptures in Souillac, the Roman Church was portrayed as being old, tired and in need of renewal. The battles of the reforming popes against the lay authority had not been won.[91] The seated figure of St. Peter at Souillac *[fig.13]* is hardly reflective of a renewed institutional Church. Schapiro has remarked on the youthful, stable appearance of the monastic saint *[fig.14]* relative to the appearance of St. Peter. I would

[88] Jones, 7.
[89] Blumenthal, *Investiture Controversy,* 65.
[90] Odo of Cluny, "*The Life of St. Gerald of Aurillac"* 136.
[91] This is so whether or not the Concordat of Worms had been concluded by the date of the sculptures.

add that the baby-like cheeks on the monastic saint stand out as a feature of his appearance. At the time of the sculptures in Souillac, the earlier, more diffuse, monastic renewal was not wholly complete. Proprietary abbeys under the control of lay authorities still existed. But monastic reform had come a long way. Independence from lay authority had largely been attained by the reformed monastic houses. Unlike Theophilus, monastic officials were no longer obliged to do homage to the devil in order to acquire office and the devil could not alienate the property of monastic houses at will.[92]

The placement of the framing saints, with the seated monastic saint at the opening of a narrative that condemns simony and lay investiture and the seated figure of St. Peter at its closing, makes sense from a historical point of view.

2.5.3. The Beasts beneath the Thrones

Historians have largely ignored the meaning of the beasts. Vidal *et al*, without giving any explanation for that identification, write that they represent the asp and basilisk of the *Psalms. Psalm 90:13* does refer to an asp and basilisk, but neither the *Psalm* itself nor an exposition on it by Augustine of Hippo appears to offer any reasonable connection to the sculptures at Souillac. [93]

It is my thesis that, beneath the thrones of the two seated-saints are beasts representing those sins or vices to the control of which the seated saints were most committed. Under the throne of St. Peter, biting each other's tails, are two winged-dragons, crossed in the

[92] For more on the comparison between monastic renewal and Church reform, see Blumenthall, *Investiture Controversy,* 64-70 and Constable, *Religious Communities 1024-1215,* 355-60.
[93] Augustine of Hippo. *Psalm 91.* Cap. 17 in St. Augustine: *Exposition on the Book of Psalms.*

form of an "X" *[fig. 15]*. From the outset of the reform movement in the Roman Church in 1049, the two evils singled out by the papacy as being most in need of immediate control by the Church were priestly marriage and simony.[94] In the case of each evil, the definition of what was encompassed by the concept proved to be somewhat elastic. It is those two evils, I suggest, that are represented by the twin dragons under the throne of St. Peter. Only one of the two, simony in its expanded sense, has thus far been encountered in the sculptural program at Souillac. The other, priestly marriage, will also be met and expanded upon in the sculptures at Souillac.

Beneath the monastic saint is a serpent *[fig.16]*, described by Schapiro as being more "compact and rounded, deployed horizontally in three coilings"[95]. The body of the serpent actually contains three visible heads. At the right end of the serpent, looking toward the narrative scene in the centre and toward St. Peter is a large, bearded, human-sized head. From each of the two other coils in the body of the serpent protrudes the torso and head of a little demon. The two lesser demons differ from one another and differ from the large, human-sized head. A similar serpent is prominently placed on the right side of the lower lintel at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, beside the many-headed monster *[fig. 19]*. In its day, the serpent beneath the monastic saint at Souillac would have conveyed symbolic meaning to the monastic communities in the areas around Souillac and Beaulieu.

[94] Blumenthal, *Investiture Controversy*, 73.
[95] Schapiro, "Sculptures of Souillac", 108-9

The driving force in the south of France behind that earlier monastic renewal was Odo of Cluny. According to Odo, following Augustine, the original sin of humankind was pride, a sin of the spirit.[96] It was the sin of pride that Adam exhibited when he was confronted by God about eating the forbidden fruit. Rather than admitting that he had erred and seeking to atone, Adam tried to shift the blame elsewhere. From that one spiritual sin of pride, according to Odo, sins of the flesh such as lust, avarice and malice sprang.[97] The form of the serpent beneath the monastic saint reflects the perception that there is a single, dominant sin of humanity, a sin of the spirit, reflected by the large human head, and that other sins, the sins of the flesh, spring from it.

I will at this point move to the second relief in the program that is able to be entered through a known narrative, the Sacrifice of Abraham, depicted on the left side of the trumeau.

[96] This view was not unique to Odo. It is found, for example, in the writings of Augustine of Hippo.
[97] Odo, *Collationes I, 12:528*

CHAPTER III - SACRIFICE AND THE MARRIED PRIEST

Similar to the approach followed in the Theophilus relief, the designer of the program at Souillac will be seen to have taken another well-known narrative, the story of the Sacrifice of Abraham, and presented it in a manner that differs markedly in emphasis from the expected, thereby directing the viewer along paths that lead to the consideration of certain issues that were of contemporary concern in the Church. I will commence this part, as I did with the Theophilus narrative, by looking to the manner in which the story of the Sacrifice of Abraham was ordinarily understood and represented in the latter half of the eleventh century and the early twelfth century in order to identify the unexpected and irregular in its presentation at Souillac. Once those differences have been identified, it will become possible to follow the paths directed by the designer.

3.1 The Sacrifice of Abraham

By the time of Ramé's study in 1885,[98] the scene on the left face of the trumeau *[fig.5]* had been firmly identified to depict the narrative of the Sacrifice of Abraham, a narrative that was well-known and frequently represented in French Romanesque monumental sculpture in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth century. I will begin with the biblical account.

According to *Genesis* 22:1-13, God told Abraham to take his only son Isaac to a particular place on top of Mount Moriah and to offer him as a holocaust. Abraham and Isaac left on their journey accompanied by a couple of servants and a donkey. When they

[98] Ramé, 230.

came to a location where Mount Moriah was visible in the distance, Abraham told the servants that they and the donkey were to remain where they were. He and Isaac would go on alone. Abraham had Isaac carry the wood for the holocaust, while Abraham himself carried the sword and the fire. As they approached the designated place, Isaac asked his father where the victim of the holocaust was. Abraham answered that God would provide the victim. At the designated place on Mount Moriah, Abraham built an altar, laid the wood on it, and then bound Isaac on top of the pile of wood. When Abraham raised the sword to kill his son, however, an angel called out, telling him not to lay his hand on the boy. The obedience of Abraham had satisfied the angel that Abraham feared God. Abraham looked up and saw, in the briers behind him, a ram stuck by his horns. He took the ram and offered it for a holocaust to God in the place of his son. [99]

The biblical version of the narrative emphasizes the unquestioning obedience of Abraham to the authority of God. For Christians, the story came to be used in both art and text for its similarities to Christian sacrifice. In the words of the Mass, the priest, holding his hands over the host, asks God to accept the Eucharistic offering just as God has accepted the sacrifice of Abraham. In medieval art and text, however, it was not the unquestioning obedience of the father but the willing role of the son in the sacrifice that came to be central. Isaac's sacrifice was seen to prefigure the self-sacrifice of Christ on the cross. That prefiguring potential of Isaac's sacrifice was recognized at a very early date. Clement of Alexandria, for example, (ca. 150 - ca. 215) wrote:

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[99] *Genesis* 22: 1-13, Latin Vulgate Old Testament Bible: Douay-Rheims translation. Throughout this paper, all biblical references and quotations will be based on this translation of the Vulgate.

> Where, then, was the door by which the Lord showed himself? The flesh by which he was manifested? He is Isaac who is a type of the Lord, a child as a son. For he was the son of Abraham, as Christ was the Son of God; and a sacrifice like the Lord only he was not immolated as the Lord was.[100]

That exegetical potential of Isaac's sacrifice, in text, continued and became more intricate through to the time of the sculptures at Souillac.

In art, the development of the Sacrifice of Abraham largely follows the textual development. Isabel Speyart Van Woerden has catalogued and divided the monumental portrayals of the Sacrifice into three groups according to their iconography, concluding that:

> … during the age of the persecutions *[the Sacrifice of Abraham]* has been a symbol of deliverance; from 313 onwards it appears transformed into a dramatic scene with allegorical bynotes; from the early Middle Ages onwards it becomes the principal prototype of Christ's death on the cross; this last motif reaches its classical form in France and the Mosan region, in the twelfth century.[101]

There are far too many, too varied, representations of the story in art for it to be possible safely to come to anything more precise than those general conclusions drawn by Speyart Van Woerden. Unlike the Theophilus legend discussed earlier where it was possible to reconstruct with some confidence the single purpose for which the legend was used in

[100] Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 1 5:215
[101] Van Woerden, 242.

early-twelfth century France, there is no single purpose for which the story of the Sacrifice of Abraham was used. It can only safely be said that it was ordinarily used in twelfth-century France for its potential to prefigure the willing self-sacrifice of Christ in the Passion and in the Eucharist.

I show here three instances of the representation of the Sacrifice of Abraham in French Romanesque monumental sculpture which collectively serve to give a sense of how the narrative was ordinarily presented, in France, at about the time of the sculptures in Souillac. All three are dated to approximately 1100. On a capital from the choir of Cluny abbey in Burgundy *[fig.20]*, Isaac is seen, bound and sitting on a throne, smiling out at the viewer. To his left is the now badly-damaged figure of Abraham who prepares to sacrifice his son. On the right, the angel arrives to stop the process. The centrality of Isaac and his smiling visage serve to emphasize his willing participation, almost his joy, in his own sacrifice. The throne on which he sits anticipates the enthroned Christ. A reasonably similar arrangement of figures, again with Abraham on the left and the angel on the right, can be seen on a capital from the north side of the nave of the Languedocian abbey church at Conques *[fig.21]*. Isaac is not smiling as he gazes directly out at the viewer and it is more clearly an altar upon which he sits. A capital from the cloister of the abbey-church at Moissac *[fig.22]* has Isaac kneeling upon a burning altar, with Abraham on the left and the angel on the right. At both Conques and Moissac, the emphasis on the altar serves to connect directly the sacrifice of Isaac not only to the sacrifice of Christ in the Passion but also to the Eucharistic sacrifice. These three examples share certain features. Each shows three distinct figures, each figure being

given its own, reasonably equal, amount of space. In each, the place of Isaac is central. Isaac is presented as an independent actor, willingly offering himself up to God.

While the biblical narrative may ordinarily have been presented in late-eleventh and early-twelfth century French monumental sculpture to prefigure the willing self-sacrifice of Christ, it was, on occasion, presented otherwise. On a sculpted capital at St. Sernin in Toulouse, in the north transept adjacent to the nave, the narrative is presented differently *[fig.23]*. The space on the capital at St. Sernin is, like that on the other capitals that have just been seen, divided into three equal parts, but the arrangement and centrality of the figures at St. Sernin differs significantly. On the left is the angel; in the centre, dominating all, the seated figure of Abraham; to the right, and under the hand of Abraham, a very small version of Isaac kneels to his earthly father. There is no altar. At St. Sernin, the emphasis is not on Isaac's willing self-sacrifice to God, but rather on Abraham. The representation of the Sacrifice of Abraham at St. Sernin is unusual in the monumental sculpture of Romanesque France.

Against these roughly contemporaneous examples,[102] the place that each of Abraham and Isaac hold in the scene at Souillac can be considered. At Souillac, there is no altar or throne, and in that sense it is similar to the sculpture at St. Sernin. Also, similar to that at St. Sernin, Isaac is not central to the presentation. The space at Souillac, however, is not divided into three parts but into two equal parts - between the angelic messenger and the ram descending, on the one hand, and, on the other, Abraham and Isaac standing

[102] The dating of the individual sculptures is uncertain. All that can safely be said is that each dates to the late-eleventh or early-twelfth century..

vertically on the top of a mountain. The hand of the angel grasps the hand of Abraham at the exact mid-point of the relief, that point that is located mid-way between the sacred and profane worlds at which sacrifice is said to occur.[103] In that respect, Souillac resembles none of the four instances earlier considered. I note that, at Souillac, Isaac's face is not directed upward toward God. Even his head is not directed upward. He leans, with closed eyes, into the chest of his father. Abraham's head is also tilted, visually blocking direct upward communication by Isaac *[fig.24]*. The pairing of the standing figures of Abraham and Isaac echoes that of the descending figures of the angel and the ram. Isaac's counterpart is the ram. At Souillac, I would argue, Isaac's independent role as an actor in his near sacrifice is virtually eliminated. The emphasis is not on Isaac's prefiguring potential for the willing self-sacrifice of Christ but rather on the primacy of Abraham in the event. Isaac is portrayed as a potential object of sacrifice about whose sacrifice decisions are made by others. In that respect, the program at Souillac departs markedly from that which would ordinarily have been expected in France at the time of the sculptural program.

The discussion has thus far focused on the relative place of each of Abraham and Isaac in the near-sacrifice at Souillac. I now turn to the representation of the ram at Souillac. The left face of the trumeau differs from the expected in French Romanesque sculpture in both the prominence it gives to the ram and in the mode of delivery of the ram. In the biblical version, the ram appears in the brambles, almost incidentally, after the near-sacrifice has been halted. The ram came ordinarily to be represented in Christian art from

[103] Baschet, *L'iconographie médiévale,* 207-208

700 forward, if it was represented at all, in the background.[104] It is thus set, for example, on the capital at Conques *[fig 21]*. Yet, visually, at Souillac, the ram is as prominent as is Isaac, a feature that serves not only to devalue Isaac's independent role but also to augment the significance of the ram.

The mode of arrival of the ram - by angelic messenger - has no textual foundation in the *Genesis* account. Schapiro remarks that the image at Souillac, in its departure from the canonical type in respect of the delivery of the ram, is "exceptional".[105] While the angelic delivery of the ram at Souillac is exceptional, it is not unique in French Romanesque art. It can be found, for example, on a capital in the nave of the cathedral of St. Lazare in Autun, considered to date to approximately 1125 - 1140 *[fig.25]*. At Autun, the usual Romanesque configuration of three players, Abraham, Isaac and the angel, in three reasonably equal spaces, with Isaac in the centre, is maintained. What is unusual at Autun is the delivery of the ram. The angel, with one hand, stops the slaying while, with the other, he delivers the ram who will take the place of Isaac on the altar in accordance with the will of God. The divine messenger at Autun delivers one object of

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[104] See Schapiro, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture*, 136.

[105] See Schapiro, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture*, 136. Arthur Kingsley Porter noted the presence of the angel bringing the ram on some early Irish crosses: see Porter, "*The Crosses and Culture of Ireland"* 114-115. Schapiro followed up on its presence in Romanesque art in "The Angel with the Ram in Abraham's Sacrifice: A Parallel in Western and Islamic Art", 134-135. According to Schapiro, this exceptional conception of the delivery of the ram is to be found, outside France, in Romanesque sculpture on the tympanum of the south aisle portal of San Isidoro in Leòn, Spain; on a capital in the nave of the Cathedral in Parma, Italy; and on the portal of S. Marcello, Capua, Italy. In France, in addition to its appearance at Souillac and at St. Lazare, Autun, the angelic delivery appears on capitals from Notre-Dame-de-la-Couldre in Parthenay and St. Seurin in Bordeaux.[105]

sacrifice, the ram, to act as a substitute for another object of sacrifice, Isaac, the first and beloved son.

The angelic delivery of the substitute object of sacrifice is evident also at Souillac, where there is even greater emphasis on the divine substitution. That greater emphasis is achieved in two ways - by the previously-noted visual equivalence of the ram to Isaac and also by the visual irregularity of the manner in which the angel and the substitute arrive. Vidal has remarked, albeit negatively, on the near-vertical descent of the two.[106] She attributes that near-verticality to a deficiency in artistry. I disagree. Dive-bombing angels are not the norm at Souillac. The angelic messengers in the Theophilus relief *[fig.4]* do not descend vertically. Even when they are headed toward an individual, their paths curve. It is my position that the irregular descent of the angel and ram, when coupled with the visual equivalency of the ram to Isaac, leads to the conclusion that the designer's intent was to emphasize the divine substitution of one object of sacrifice, the ram, for another object of sacrifice, the first-born son. The theme of the divine substitution of one object of sacrifice for another, thus begun on the left face of the trumeau, will be further developed in the program at Souillac.

Before I leave consideration of the left face itself, there are a few details that should be noted. I will not be able to account for them in this paper but they may, and I suggest do, have meaning which I hope to write on elsewhere. At the base of the relief on the left face of the trumeau is the crumpled figure of a boy carrying fire and wood *[fig.26]*.

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[106] Vidal *et al,* 286.

Vidal pronounced the figure to be a servant setting the fire at the altar.[107] Baschet states that the broken figure at the base of the left face may refer to a servant clearing a rocky prominence in order to recall the biblical account of the sacrifice at Mount Moriah. The *Genesis* account is quite specific that no servant accompanied Abraham and Isaac to the place of the intended sacrifice. Abraham and Isaac went to that place alone, Isaac carrying the wood, Abraham the fire. The boy at the bottom of the left face carries with him the instruments of a holocaust, fire and wood. His hair and clothes do not differ from those of Isaac above. Baschet suggests that, if the figure is not a servant, perhaps it is Isaac. Although Abraham's near-sacrifice of his son was rejected by God as unacceptable, that rejection by God allowed Isaac to live, to marry, to father a child and to take his place among the patriarchs under the Old Law. It is not reasonable, therefore, that the broken figure would represent the child, Isaac. The figure remains unexplained.

In addition to the broken figure at the base of the left face of the trumeau, there are other unexplained details on the left face that may have meaning. Abraham's actions were determined by and were fully obedient to the will of God. Yet, Abraham is shown to grasp Isaac by the hair, and on that arm of Abraham that grasps the hair can be seen the claws of one of the crossed beasts from the front of the trumeau. Both lend a sense of as yet unexplained malevolence to Abraham's participation in the near sacrifice of his son, particularly when seen in conjunction with the broken figure of the boy at the base of the left face. To further compound that sense of malevolence, the tail of the serpent, a serpent that will be seen to support the superposed pairs of males on the right face of the

[107] Vidal *et al*, 286

trumeau, wraps around and into the base of the left face, around the leg of the broken figure of the boy.

I would caution that the grasping of Isaac's hair by Abraham may not have been considered to be irregular at the time of the sculptures at Souillac. Porter notes that, on a few of the early Irish crosses, Abraham grasps a lock of Isaac's hair.[108] Alison Moore Smith, in her study of the iconography of the Sacrifice of Isaac, shows that, in Early Christian art, Abraham is sometimes seen to grasp Isaac by the hair.[109] Neither Porter nor Smith offers any explanation for that iconographic detail. Certainly on the Sacrifice capital from Cluny abbey *[fig.20]* and perhaps on that at St.-Sernin, in Toulouse *[fig.23]*, Abraham has his hand on the top of Isaac's head, seeming to hold Isaac by the hair, which could suggest that this early motif was carried forward into the art of the French Romanesque. More work will have to be done on the art-historical significance of the detail. However, I do note that the grasping of the hair at Souillac does not stand alone as a sign of malevolence.

The major emphases of the left face of the trumeau, in summary, are twofold. In the near-sacrifice, the independent will of the son is eliminated and the role of the ram as a divine substitute is stressed. The theme of sacrifice, begun on the left face of the trumeau, is further developed in the reliefs that are now set to the left of the trumeau. The original placement of these reliefs, relative to one another and to the left face of the trumeau, is not known. A careful examination of the details of those reliefs, considered

[108] Porter, *The Crosses and Culture of Ireland,* 115.
[109] Smith, 161.

in relation to the left face of the trumeau, helps to make connections that can no longer safely be based only on relative positioning.

3.2 The Small Relief

Augustine of Hippo wrote, "*[t]*here are four things to be considered in any sacrifice: to whom it is offered, by whom it is offered, what it is that is offered, and for whom it is offered."[110] The program at Souillac will be seen to concern itself with two of those considerations - what it is that is offered and by whom it is offered. The Sacrifice of Abraham relief on the left face of the trumeau begins the development of that first consideration - the acceptability to God of that which is offered as a sacrifice. The angelic messenger is shown to stop the near-sacrifice of the first-born son Isaac and to provide in its place an animal, the ram.

It was not a novel concept in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that the near-sacrifice of Isaac ended human sacrifice and signaled its replacement with animal sacrifice. Even before the Christian era, the story of Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac was understood to emphasize "that such a sacrifice *[of the first-born son]* was not needed or required in the worship of the God of Israel, and that an animal should be substituted".[111] Following the self-sacrifice of Christ in the Passion, Christians questioned the continued need for, and acceptability to God of animal sacrifice. The position of the early Christian Church on the practice of animal sacrifice is set forth in *Hebrews* 10:4-14. Sin cannot be taken

[110] Augustine of Hippo, *On the Holy Trinity*, 4:14-19.
[111] Sales, 112.

away with the blood of animals. Animal sacrifice, no matter how frequently practiced, is not pleasing to God. By his one bodily oblation, Jesus Christ perfected sacrifice forever.

Despite the insufficiency of animal sacrifice as practiced by the Jews, animal sacrifice continued to be recognized by Christians as a typology for the self-sacrifice of Christ. Augustine of Hippo (d. 430) explained:

> As regards animal sacrifices, every Christian knows that they were enjoined as suitable to a perverse people, and not because God had any pleasure in them. Still, even in these sacrifices *there were types [figurae]* of what we enjoy, for we cannot obtain purification or the propitiation of God without blood. The fulfillment of these types is Christ, by whose blood we are purified and redeemed.[112] *[emphasis is mine]*

Hrabanus Maurus (d. 856),[113] a Frankish Benedictine monk, was specific about the particular sacrificial-animal that was a type for the sacrifice of Christ. As a sacrificial offering, Christ is the Ram:

> … Christ is the Sheep, he is the Son, he is the Lamb: the Son, because he was born; the Ram, because he was offered.[114]

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[112] Augustine of Hippo, *Contra Faustum Manicheam: XVIII,* 6:238

[113] I have included references to Hrabanus Maurus when the general understanding of words is required because he was a well-known teacher who took Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* and added typological, historical and mystical interpretation of scripture. He is not known for originality. As Priscilla Throop states in her introduction to *De Universo,* xiii, "*[m]*uch of Hrabanus' exegesis is taken directly from Augustine, Jerome, Bede, Origen, Eusebius and Gregory the Great". His work was intended to serve as a reference work for clerics and teachers throughout the empire in Carolingian time. It is his very lack of originality and general, conservative, usage that makes his writings helpful when the general understanding of words and symbols is what is sought.

As Elizabeth Saxon writes, "*[i]*n order to prove the seamless plan of salvation throughout all time, it was necessary to assert the vital continuity of sacrifice from the Old Testament to that of the concluding one perfect sacrifice of Christ on this cross which brought in the New Covenant."[115] The literate monk at Souillac would have understood that the angelic substitution of the ram referred to the substitution of a type of Christ in fulfillment of earlier sacrificial practices. It was not only in the Passion that Christ was understood sacrificially. The Eucharist, too, was understood and described as sacrifice. Differences existed in the medieval era regarding the nature of the real presence of Christ in the consecrated host of the Eucharist, but the concept of the Eucharist as a sacrificial act was not the subject of debate.[116]

In the art at Souillac, I argue that the continuity of sacrifice does not end with the angelic delivery of the ram as a substitute for Isaac. The ram, seen to descend from heaven in the Old Testament sacrifice scene on the trumeau *[fig.24]*, is encountered again on a relief presently set high on a pillar to the left of the door, a relief that I will refer to as 'the small relief *[fig.27]*. Because of uncertainty relating to the original placement of the sculptures at Souillac relative to one another and to the door, I will not base my arguments on their current relative placement. It is not necessary to do so. The continuity of the ram, the offered Christ, encircled by a profusion of vines, vine-leafs and grape clusters, standard Eucharistic symbols, is sufficient in itself to establish that the upper portion of the scene on the small relief represents the one perfect sacrifice, the Eucharistic sacrifice. At the

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[114] Hrabanus Maurus, 27.
[115] Saxon, *The Eucharist in Romanesque France*, 50
[116] Fitzpatrick, 129.

outset of this paper, I spoke of the program affording the tools to permit the literate viewer to decode the complex animal symbolism involved. The tools needed to decode the symbolism of the ram and grape leaves on the small relief are very basic ones indeed.

At the base of the small relief, however, a pair of visibly sexualized lions appears to attack the ram, previously proposed to be the type of Christ, in a manner that is palpably violent *[fig. 27]*. I will address first the sexualized presentation of the lions. The motif of the crossed lions is not unique to Souillac. It appears elsewhere in Languedoc in monumental Romanesque sculpture. In particular, it appears on the portal programs of each of the nearby abbey churches at Moissac and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, portal programs to which the sculptures at Souillac have consistently been linked. The circumstances under which the crossed lions are presented at each of those other churches supports the inference that the crossed lions at Souillac would have been understood by the monastic audience at Souillac to represent sexually connected humans.

On the great trumeau at Moissac *[fig.28]* are three pairs of superposed, crossed, felines very similar in their form to the pair of felines on the small relief at Souillac. The formal difference between the felines at Moissac and those on the small relief at Souillac is that, at Moissac, the heads of the beasts face outward. On the small relief at Souillac, the beasts cross and separate as they do at Moissac, but then turn back to attack jointly the ram. At Moissac, as at Souillac, the sexual attributes of the beasts are conspicuous. Ilene Forsyth, speaking of the swollen udders of the females and the phalli of males at Moissac, writes:

> "They were conspicuously employed as attributes of these rampant beasts, monumental lions and lionesses arranged in an x-like design, with the females on top. … The telling details - teats and tools - provide an emphasis on lactation and generation as well as on the attractions and revulsions of sexuality and sensuality."[117]

I entirely support her comments in this regard. At Moissac, the crossed felines with their conspicuous sexual attributes connect the figure of *luxuria,* in her incarnation as *la femme aux serpents,* on the left lateral wall of the porch, to the figure of the Virgin in the Annunciation scene set on the right lateral wall of the porch, opposing lust to chastity. Between them are the crossed felines with their sexual attributes.

At Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, crossed felines are also shown beneath the standing figure of St. Benedict on the left lateral wall of the south porch *[fig.29]*. Similar to those on the trumeau at Moissac, the crossed pair beneath St. Benedict face outward. However, at Beaulieu, the pair displays no sexual attributes at all. The sculptural program on the lateral walls of the south porch at Beaulieu deals with what I will describe generally as temptation and the overcoming of temptation. On the right lateral wall, the biblical subject is the Temptation of Christ, while on the left lateral wall, the biblical subject is Daniel taming the lions. Given its placement as part of these scenes relating to the overcoming of human temptation, the representation of Benedict standing on these crossed lions may, I suggest, have been intended to refer to story of the Temptation of St.

[117] Ilene Forsyth, "Narrative at Moissac", 75.

Benedict.[118] In that story, St. Benedict is said to have become unable to rid himself of thoughts of a particular woman. He ultimately did so by stripping off his clothes and throwing his naked body into the brambles until, finally, the thoughts of the woman were driven out. What is significant for a consideration of the crossed felines at Souillac is that, at Beaulieu, the crossed felines beneath St. Benedict, shown to be under the control of St. Benedict, are without teats, without phalli, without any discernible indication even of gender. A likely interpretation for the physical features of the animals is that St. Benedict, in overcoming his own temptations, has eliminated the sexuality and sensuality of the crossed lions and reduced them to a state of safe, total neutrality. The crossed felines in the small relief at Souillac are not so reduced. Like those at Moissac, their sexuality is patent.

Not only would the crossed felines on the small relief at Souillac *[fig.27]* have been intended to appear sexualized, but their place on the relief has been emphasized. In its design, the small relief repeats many of the devices employed in the Theophilus relief to direct the viewer toward a reading in which the devil and the errant church official, as distinct from the Virgin, become the focus. In the small relief, the scale of the felines is larger than that of the ram just as the scale of Theophilus and the devil was greater than that of the Virgin. The effect of that difference in scale is compounded in each of the two reliefs by the proximity of the figures to the viewer. The original location of the small relief relative to the other panels is not known, but I do suggest that it would have been

[118] The Temptation of St. Benedict is depicted on a near-contemporaneous capital in the nave of the Babbey church of Sainte-Marie Madelaine, at Vézélay in Burgundy.

highly unlikely, in Romanesque sculpture, for Eucharistic symbols to have been set lower than the location of the devil in the Theophilus relief. It is probable that the small relief panel was elevated somewhere. There are two felines and only one ram, just as there are two scenes of the devil and Theophilus and only one of the Virgin. The felines are centered on the relief where the ram is not. It is the crossed lions that dominate the relief, not the ram who, I suggest, is Christ offered up in sacrifice just as it is Theophilus and the devil, not the Virgin, who dominate the Theophilus relief. It seems that the designer of the program at Souillac took a number of steps to ensure the visual dominance of, and to focus attention on, the sexually charged pair of male and female.

The small relief reflects not only the sexuality of the crossed lions but also suggests violence in the biting-attack of the lions on the ram *[fig.27]*. Whether that violence was intended to have a meaning that is independent of defiling effect of the sexuality of the lions must be considered. In Romanesque monumental art, even the sacrifice of Christ in the Passion was not ordinarily depicted violently. The earliest depictions of Christ on the cross show him living and victorious. There are exceptional instances, such as in the wooden Gero Crucifix from the late tenth century Germany, in which the suffering of a human Christ is shown. It was rare, however, before 1150, for Christ to be shown in monumental stone sculpture as a suffering human. On the tympana of each of Moissac and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, a risen, triumphant, Christ is represented.[119] If the self-sacrifice of the Passion was not ordinarily shown to be violent in Romanesque monumental art, the Eucharistic sacrifice as depicted in Romanesque monumental art was

[119] Saxon, *The Eucharist in Romanesque France,* 210-211.

even further removed from violence. Traditional Eucharistic symbols developed in art. Saxon lists them as "the vine, grapes, birds, […] the chalice and, most significant of all, the Lamb."[120] A capital in the narthex at Moissac, ca. 1115 - ca. 1135, fully covered in vines and grape clusters, is typical *[fig. 30]*. These symbols are all far removed from the violence with which the lions attack the ram on the small relief at Souillac *[fig.27]*. I know of no artistic precedent for the portrayal of the Eucharistic rite as a violent act.

However, just as it was necessary to caution that the manner in which Abraham grasped Isaac by the hair may not, standing alone, have signaled malevolence, so a caution is necessary in respect of the apparent violence in the attack of the crossed felines in the small relief. The violence with which the lions attack the flesh of the ram on the small relief may not have been as irregular as it first appears when the rhetoric attached to debates on the theology of the Eucharist in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries is considered. The ingestion by the faithful of the consecrated host was understood and described, at least by certain senior theologians of the day, in a highly physical and violent manner. In 1059, Berengar, the *scholasticus* of the church of St. Martin in Tours, who challenged Paschasian Eucharistic theology, was summoned to appear before the Roman Synod. Berengar was presented with an oath drawn up by Humbert, Cardinal-bishop of Silva Candida, which he signed and read to the Synod. That 'confession of 1059' reads:

[120] Saxon, *The Eucharist in Romanesque France,* 77.

> […] the bread and wine which are laid on the altar are after consecration not only a sacrament but also the true body and blood of our lord Jesus Christ, and they are physically taken up and broken in the hands of the priest and crushed by the teeth of the faithful, not only sacramentally but in truth.[121]

Berengar later repudiated the confession of 1059 as being given under duress.[122] He and Gregory VII ultimately arrived at a slightly more moderated statement that was presented at the Synod of Rome in 1079. However, the confession of 1059 passed into canon law collections and was widely distributed.[123] The possibility must be acknowledged that the violence of the attack of the lions on the ram, seen in isolation from their sexuality, may simply have reflected the violence that certain orthodox theologians believed to be involved in the physical ingestion of the consecrated host.

Even if, at the time of the sculptures at Souillac, the violent ingestion of the host may have been considered to be regular, as I will show in the following discussion, sexual conduct by those who offered up the Eucharistic sacrifice was certainly understood to defile the object of sacrifice *[fig.27]*. A consideration of the acceptability to God of the object of sacrifice has been developed at Souillac through the continuity of the ram. The second of Augustine's considerations that is developed at Souillac is a consideration of acceptability to God of the person who offers the sacrifice, a consideration that begins in the sculptural program with the small relief. Before I turn to that development, it is

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[121] Macy, *Theologies of the Eucharist.* 36.
[122] Macy, *Theologies of the Eucharist,* 36.
[123] Macy, *Theologies of the Eucharist,* 40-41.

necessary to turn briefly to the figures of Isaiah and Joseph which have not, thus far, been discussed.

3.3. Isaiah

Presently set between the scene of the sacrifice of Abraham on the trumeau and the door to the nave is the large, moving, chiasmic figure of Isaiah, *[fig.6]* identified by the inscription of his name. The scroll which he carries and to which he points signals his prophetic role. Ramé, in his early work on the sculptures at Souillac, wrote that Isaiah was represented at Souillac, a church dedicated to the Virgin, because Isaiah was the prophet of the virgin birth. Isaiah was thus commonly represented in French Romanesque monumental sculpture. For example, on the right jamb at Moissac, Isaiah's scroll extends toward the location on the lateral wall of the portal where the scene of the Annunciation to the Virgin is set *[fig.31]*. In the sculptural program at Souillac, neither the role of the Virgin nor that of the virgin birth is significant.

It is not in respect of the virgin birth alone that twelfth-century theologians turned to the exegetical possibilities of the writings of Isaiah. Of particular relevance to the program at Souillac are the comments of Isaiah relating to the acceptability to God of sacrifices offered by those who are not themselves acceptable to God. The writings of Isaiah, in the thought of eleventh and twelfth centuries, served to connect the Old Testament laws for ritual purity to the purity requirements for those who celebrate the Christian Mass.

Isaiah wrote of a vision in which God rejects the sacrifices offered by the iniquitous people of Israel, comparing them to the people of Gomorrah:

> 11. To what purpose do you offer me the multitude of your victims, sayeth the Lord? I am full, I desire not holocausts of rams, and the fat of fatlings, and blood of calves, and lambs, and buck goats. […] 13. Offer sacrifice no more in vain [...][124]

Those words were quoted in Letter 31, written in the last half of 1049 by Peter Damian to Pope Leo IX, relating to the sexual impurity of priests. That letter will assume particular significance when attention turns to the right face of the trumeau at Souillac.[125] The figure of Isaiah introduces to the development of the theme of sacrifice at Souillac a consideration of the acceptability to God of the priest offering the Eucharistic sacrifice.

3.4. Joseph

Set on the left jamb of the main entrance door to the nave is the standing figure of an individual *[fig.7]* whose name is carved to read "OSEPH" *[fig. 32]*. The identification of that figure by historians has not been without its issues. Ramé identified the figure to be Joseph, the husband of the Virgin. He stated that the presence of Joseph in a church dedicated to the Virgin was appropriate because Joseph's role was to act as the protector of the Virgin. [126] That identification has been accepted by most scholars without debate.

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[124] *Isaiah* 1: 11-13
[125] Peter Damian, Letter 31: 52.
[126] Ramé, 230.

However, certain historians have suggested that the 'OSEPH' may be Joseph the Patriarch as distinct from Joseph the husband of the Virgin.[127] Joseph the Patriarch was considered by a number of the patristic fathers to be an Old Testament type for the living Christ.[128] Raymond Rey took the position that the figure represents the prophet Hosea, a minor prophet of the Old Testament who urged fallen Israelites to repent and return to their God. Rey's reasoning seems to be that if there was to be the chief major prophet in the person of Isaiah set to one side of the door, then the chief minor prophet should be set to the other.

John Williams, in accepting the identification as Joseph, the husband of the Virgin, remarked on the exceptional iconographic innovation of portraying Joseph apart from the holy family. The representations of Joseph on the right wall of the porch at Moissac reflect the manner in which Joseph, the husband of the Virgin, was conceived at the time. At ground level in the porch sculptures, near life-sized carvings of the Virgin in the Annunciation and Visitation scenes greet the visitor to the porch. Joseph is not present in those scenes. Above them, and much smaller in scale, are reliefs in which Joseph does appear. In those, Joseph is shown only with the holy family, and only in roles that are supportive of and protective of the holy family. In the Adoration of the Magi *[fig.33]* scene, he is set inconspicuously to the extreme right of the scene, kneeling well behind the Virgin and the child. However, he physically supports the body of the Virgin as she

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[127] For example, Pradalier, 496 writes, *"Il est difficile de dire si le Joseph ici représenté est le patriarche Joseph ou le père adoptif de l'Enfant Jésus, le caractère incomplet de l'ensemble sculpté ne permettant pas de se prononcer de façon certaine sur l'identité précise du personnage."*

[128] Argyle."Joseph the Patriarch in Patristic Teaching". 67:199-201 I have found no suggestion of a sacrificial typology being attached to Joseph the Patriarch.

and the child receive the Eastern visitors. His left arm is broken off, but his left hand is still visible on the left arm of the Virgin and his right arm appears to support her back. On the frieze above that, as the family moves forward to present the child at the temple, Joseph is at the rear. But it is Joseph who receives from the angel the message urging him to flee to Egypt with his family and it is Joseph who actually leads Mary and the child into safety in Egypt. Joseph at Moissac is the supporter and the protector of the holy family. He has no independent significance. Joseph's independence of the holy family at Souillac is exceptional, as John Williams has noted.

It is my argument that the identification of OSEPH to be Joseph the husband of the Virgin is reasonable in the context of the larger program at Souillac in two distinct ways. The first connects Joseph by opposition to the Sacrifice of Abraham, a scene which introduces to the program at Souillac the general theme of fathers, sons and the sacrifice of sons. Variations on that theme will be shown to be developed elsewhere in the sculptural program at Souillac. In the analysis of the Sacrifice of Abraham relief, I showed that, unusually for its time and for reasons that are not yet apparent, the design of the relief emphasized the primacy of the role of the father, Abraham, in the sacrifice of the son, Isaac. Joseph, portrayed at Souillac as inexplicably disconnected from the holy family, may be intended to open the discussion to another sacrifice, one in which the earthly father plays no part.

The second reason for the independent presence of Joseph, the husband of the Virgin, is more readily apparent. Joseph is connected to a different theme raised by the sculptural

program, a theme that is reflected in the small relief. Joseph's independent presence connects, as does the prophet Isaiah, to the development of the theme of the acceptability to God of the cultic purity of those who offer sacrifice. I accordingly return to the small relief and bring into its consideration the place of the prophet Isaiah and the model of Joseph, the husband of the Virgin.

3.5. The Small Relief Continued

In the period under consideration in this paper, the sexual purity of priests, particularly in respect of their worthiness to come into contact with the consecrated host, was at the forefront of theological concern. The requirement of cultic purity on the part of those celebrating the Eucharistic sacrifice goes back to the apostle Paul.[129] Under Jewish law, all persons, including priests, were enjoined to go forth and multiply. Members of the Levitical priesthood were required to undergo three-day periods of cleansing before sacrificing at the altar. During those periods, they fasted, performed ritual ablutions and were sexually continent, living separate from their spouses at a location that was in or near the temple.[130] The Jewish model of continence became the model for the earliest Christian priests.[131] The words of Ambrose, bishop of Milan, (d. 397), written in the late fourth century, reflect the connection made between sexual purity and the function of the priest in offering up the sacrifice on behalf of the faithful:

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[129] Jestice, 81.
[130] Barstow, 21.
[131] Beaudette, 29.

> … the ministerial office must be kept pure and unspotted, and must not be defiled by conjugal intercourse; … Thou must have a pure body wherewith to offer up the sacraments. … dost thou, while foul in heart and body, dare to make supplication for others? Dost thou dare to make an offering for them?[132]

The Jewish model of periodic continence was, however, predicated on the fact that Jewish priests only sacrificed at the altar periodically. Christian priests came to be expected to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice daily. Periodic continence within marriage was insufficient to meet the need of the Christian priest to remain "pure and spotless" in offering up the sacrament. Absolute continence within marriage was therefore required. As Anne Barstow put it, the desert ascetics of the fourth and fifth century decreed, "not that priests could not have wives, but that they could not have sexual relations with their wives".[133] Joseph represents a significant step in that progressive revelation of purity requirements. He represents the progression from periodic continence to absolute continence. The model for absolute continence within marriage was supplied by the holy family itself.[134] For priests, that early model was Joseph. The model offered by Joseph prevailed and sufficed for many centuries.

Developments in sacramental theology, commencing in the ninth century, relating to the real presence of Christ in the consecrated host were seen ultimately to elevate the requirement for the purity of the priest far above the model of marital continence

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[132] Ambrose of Milan, "On the Duties of the Clergy", I:50.
[133] Barstow, 21.
[134] McNamara, "Chaste Marriage and Clerical Celibacy", 28. McNamara explains how the model of a spiritual, chaste union was incorporated and built upon by the Fathers of the fourth and fifth century.

provided by Joseph. Steps had been taken by the Church prior to the middle of the eleventh century, prior to the reforming papacy, to attempt to require greater sexual purity and the appearance of greater sexual purity among the secular priesthood. Prior to 1047, legislation provided that no sub-deacon or anyone above that office was permitted to marry, that everyone entering orders was to take an oath of chastity, and that all those who were married were, like Joseph, required to live with their wife as though they were brother and sister.[135] But it was not enough. As Barstow states, "*[d]*espite the decrees, canons and increasingly harsh penalties", in 1049 when Leo IX became pope, "clerical marriage was so widespread as to be the usual condition of the parish clergy; it was frequently found in every level and branch of the church…"[136] As Saxon writes, "emphasis on the essential function of the ordained priest to offer Mass was accelerated by Gregorian reform … The terrifying possibility that salvific reception might be invalidated by the immorality of […] the consecrating priest added new tensions."[137] It is in that same context of the requirements of the Mass that Isaiah's words to the people of Israel were repeated by Peter Damian in Letter 31.

The influences behind the reformers' actions against married priests were not entirely theological. The sculptures at Souillac may disclose practical concerns in addition to those offered by the theological debates. It will be recalled that, in the Theophilus relief, the monastic saint and the Theophilus narrative are centered under the central arch, but St. Peter has been set irregularly at the extreme right of the arch above him. A

[135] Brooke, 73.
[136] Barstow, 44-45.
[137] Saxon, "Romanesque Art and the Eucharist", 280.

connection was previously made between lay investiture and simony on the one hand and the eccentric setting of the figure of St. Peter on the other, based on the fact that lay investiture displaced St. Peter from that which the reforming papacy asserted was properly the prerogative of the Church *[fig.13]*. A direct connection also existed between the married priesthood and the impoverishment of the Roman Church which, together with the greater requirement for purity resulting from the theological changes relating to the real presence, caused the papacy to move from the requirement of absolute continence on Joseph's model toward the requirement of celibacy. The draining effect on what the Church saw as being its property occasioned by reason of married priests having offspring was unrelated to whether or not the offspring were born prior to ordination of the priest. [138] In a feudal era, sons, particularly eldest sons, expected to inherit property from fathers and younger sons required assistance. Daughters expected to be provided with dowries. When the parent was a high ranking Church official, provisions for the child were often made with property that was considered, at least by the Church, to belong to the Church.[139] There is thus a direct link between married priests, even those who may have adopted Joseph's model and remained absolutely continent following their ordination, and the displaced figure of the Apostle seen in the Theophilus relief at Souillac.

Two Ecumenical Councils of the Roman Church, Lateran I of 1123 and Lateran II of 1139, are agreed by scholars to have finally and definitively legislated priestly celibacy

[138] Blumenthal, *Investiture Controversy*, 241.
[139] McLaughlin, *Sex, Gender and Episcopal Authority*, 32.

and to have forced the separation of then-married priests from their wives without regard to whether the couple had been fully continent after ordination.[140] All extant priestly marriages were declared to have been, from their outset, contrary to Church law, and therefore not to have been marriages at all. The wives and children of priests were reduced to the status of concubines and bastards.[141] It is clear that, whatever debates may have attended the taking of this step, the issue of priestly marriage was coming to a head at or about the time of the sculptures at Souillac.

The cloistered monks at Souillac would not likely have experienced directly the consequences of the decisions relating to priestly marriage. However, concerns about the sexual purity of priests, particularly in respect of the worthiness of a priest to come into contact with the consecrated host, were not confined to the married, secular priesthood. Those same concerns would directly have engaged the unmarried, cloistered priests. It should here be noted that, at the time of the sculptures at Souillac, most monks, particularly those in reformed houses such as Souillac, were priests, presiding at the altar. Cultic purity was of concern to the monks. It is those concerns that will be seen to be developed on the right face of the trumeau.

3.6 Simony and priestly marriage - the crossed dragons

The steps taken by the reforming papacy to end priestly marriage were, from the outset, taken in conjunction with steps to end simony and lay investiture. Leo IX, the first of the

[140] Beaudette, 23-24.
[141] Beaudette, 23-24.

reforming popes, at the Council of Mainz in 1049, condemned those priests who were married and those who acquired their offices through simony. Papal condemnation of clerical marriage and simoniacal acquisition of office was continued by Leo at the Roman synod of 1050.[142] Through the great councils of the eleventh and the early-twelfth centuries, the twin issues of simony and priestly marriage were dealt with together. They are not identical issues, but politically and ecclesiologically they are interconnected:

> [...] the two evils *[of simony and clerical marriage]* were frequently attacked together…. Simony … was particularly related to the power of the laity over the church… This infringement of ecclesiastical rights was made worse when clergy married into and became involved with the affairs of lay families, thereby making it possible for laity to share control of church property.[143]

It is thus, I argue, that the two issues appear together at Souillac in the twin dragons crossed over one another and biting each other's tail beneath the seated figure of St. Peter framing the right end of the Theophilus relief *[fig.15]*.

Like the steps seen to be taken by the papacy against simony and lay investiture, the actions taken by the reforming papacy against married priests were heavily influenced by monastic writers *[fig.4]*. Monastic writings from the late-ninth and the tenth centuries, responding to change in the theology relating to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, prepared the way for legislative reforms relating to celibacy among the clergy as they had prepared the way for reforms relating to simony. Leidulf Melve writes that

[142] Barstow, 53.
[143] Barstow, 51.

the pressure for clerical celibacy "did not emerge suddenly, but surfaced in the Carolingian period and had important tenth-century spokesmen in Abbo of Fleury, Ademar of Chabannes and Odo of Cluny."[144] Individual monastic writers, or writers from a monastic background, began to call for greater levels of purity than were guaranteed by Joseph's model of continence within marriage.

During the Carolingian period, the influential capitulary of Bishop Theodulf of Orléans' (d. 821), whose background was monastic and who trained under Benedict of Aniane, specifically distinguished the purity requirement for Christian clergy from that of their Old Testament forbearers because Christian priests did not deal with animals but rather with the body and blood of Christ. The sacrifice of Christians, according to Theodulf, was much more sacred than was that of the Jews and therefore a greater degree of purity was required for Christians. The secular clergy alone formed the subject of concern in the writings of Theodulf because the purity of the cloistered, similar to that of the priests of the Old Testament who resided in or near the temple, was assumed by Theodulf to have been secured by the walls of the cloister.

The other monastic writer to whom I will refer is Odo, Abbot of Cluny from 927 until his death in 942.[145] Odo's *Collationes*, written between 909 and 927, is directed to the reform of the secular clergy.[146] It demands total sexual renunciation from priests. All intercourse, according to Odo, is sinful and offends God.[147] Odo, like other monastic

[144] Melve, 688-689.
[145] Odo's connection to Aurillac, the mother house of Souillac, has previously been discussed
[146] For more on this see Jestice,. 83-84.
[147] Jestice, 92- 93.

writers of the day, connects the polluting effect of sex to changes in sacramental theology. Odo specifically brings the Old Testament Sacrifice of Abraham into his discussions of sacramental purity. He writes that, in the Old Testament, just as Abraham offered Isaac, when the forefathers of Christianity offered a sacrifice to God, their concern was to not violate the temple of God. That concern with violating the temple of God is carried forward into Odo's views on Eucharistic purity. He compares the altar in the church to the holy ground on which Moses received the law and finds that the altar demands an even greater respect than did the burning bush, on which Moses did not dare even to look. The fire of the burning bush was not God, according to Odo, but only the source for the voice of God. The altar, however, is the body of Christ in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells.[148] Odo stresses the continuity to Old Testament sacrifice while simultaneously emphasizing the greater requirement for sexual purity on the part of the New Testament priest. The presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament demanded, in Odo's view, that continence be, and be seen to be, absolute.

3.7 The Sacraments of the Impure Priest.

The small relief, I argue, not only reflects the defiling effect of the sexually impure priest on the ram, the type of Christ, but may also formally raise the issue of the effect of the

[148] Odo, *Collationes*, II, *PL* 11:558 *"Nos parentes nostri, sicut Abraham obtulit Isaac, et Anna Samuelem, Deo in sacrificium obtulerunt. Nos templum Dei quod esse ipsi debuimus violantes, et oblationem ejus commaculantes idem nosmetipsos, in fermentum conversi sumus. Naaman Syrus in tantam habuit reverentiam locum in quo nomen Dei invocabatur, ut de Israel terram cum burdonibus portaret. Nos in atriis ecclesiae consistentes, in terram sanctorum, juxta quod propheta plangit, iniqua gerimus: In terra sanctorum, inquit, iniqua gessit **(Isa. XXVI, 10)**. Sed sequitur: Ideo **[Col.0558C]** non videbit gloriam Domini **(Ibid.)**. Vox ad Moysen: Locus, ait, in quo tu stas, terra sancta est **(Exod. III, 5)**. Qui etiam non est ausus respicere contra ignem, et ecce plus est in altare, ad quod nos impure et irreverenter accedimus. Nam ignis ille non erat Deus, sed creatura, ex qua vox Dei resonaret; hic vero corpus Christi est, in quo habitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis."*

sexually impure priest on the efficacy of the sacrament itself. It does so in its representation of the path taken by the ram. On the left face of the trumeau, the descent of the ram from the heavenly realm is strikingly, rigidly, vertical *[fig.5]*. One might expect its return as an object of sacrifice to God to be similarly vertical. The ram on the small relief, however, pursues a diagonal path, heading toward the upper left corner of the relief, then stopping near that corner to look back at the crossed felines who bite his haunches *[fig.27]*. The diagonal path followed by the ram on the small relief, in conjunction with the cessation of the journey of the ram, raises the question whether the sacrifice of the ram will be completed or whether it, like the near sacrifice of Isaac on the trumeau, will be rejected because it is not acceptable to God. If the sacrifice of the ram is not acceptable to God, it is not be because of the lack of acceptability of that which is offered. That which is offered is perfect. It is not acceptable because those who offer it are not acceptable.

The efficacy of the sacraments of simoniacal priests is stated by Robinson to have "provoked the most prolonged theological debate of the later eleventh century."[149] I do not propose in this paper to discuss in any detail the debates concerning the efficacy of the sacraments of unworthy priests in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. I note here only that a fundamental distinction was ultimately drawn between the sacraments of an

[149] I.S. Robinson, "*Reform and the Church*" 308

ordained priest who had lost his Christian perfection through a fall into sin and the priest whose very ordination was in question because of simony and lay investiture. [150]

Insofar as the Eucharistic sacrament was concerned, the generally accepted position at the time of the sculptures at Souillac was that which Augustine had applied to baptism, which Radbertus - in the course of his dispute with Berengar - had transferred to the Eucharist, namely that the divine power effected its own sacrament regardless of the merit of the priest, provided of course that the priest was duly ordained.[151] The ram in the small relief, I suggest, will make the decision whether to proceed upward or to turn back, regardless of the merit of the priest *[fig.27]*. The directional path taken by the ram in the small relief will be repeated elsewhere in the sculptural program in circumstances that, I argue, may also reflect then-current concerns in sacramental theology.

[150] Pelikan, vol 2, 213.
[151] Pelikan, vol 2, 213 and Peter Damian, *Opusc.30.2 (*PL 145:526)

CHAPTER IV - SACRIFICE AND SODOMY

4.1 The Right Face of the Trumeau - Introduction and Historiography

The right face of the trumeau at Souillac depicts three superposed pairs of human males.[152] A connection between the upper-most pair on the right *[fig.34]* and the scene of the Sacrifice of Abraham on the left face of the trumeau *[fig.24]* has long been recognized. The two lower pairs, however, are noticeably different *[figs. 35 & 36]*. Formally, the lower pairs have a stronger connection to the crossed felines in the small relief *[fig.27]* than they do to the vertical pairing of Abraham and Isaac. However, perhaps because the meaning of the small relief has been largely ignored, the historiography does not connect the small relief to the reading of the right face of the trumeau. The result, I suggest, has been a markedly incomplete reading of that right face.

I propose in this part to give a reasonably detailed historiography of the study of the right face. I will then reconsider the right face, beginning with the two lower pairs. I expect to show that the right face of the trumeau continues the development of the theme, begun on the small relief, of the sexual impurity of the priest and its potential defilement of an object of sacrifice. The object of sacrifice on the right face, I suggest, is a child oblate, a son offered up by his father as a living sacrifice to God in the monastery.

[152] The current placement of the trumeau makes it very difficult to obtain, in a single, clear, photograph, an image of the whole of the right face. Accordingly, it will be necessary to refer to different photographs to obtain a sense of the whole.

The right face itself has not been the subject of much historical attention. Arthur Kingsley Porter, in his 1930 work on Irish crosses, touched briefly on the right face at Souillac, which he identified to represent Jacob wrestling with an angel. Porter's identification of the scene has not been taken up by other historians. Schapiro, to whose writings I will turn next, comments, in respect of Porter's identification, that "Jacob" displays no attributes and the angel is without wings. Porter does, however, observe certain details on the right face that are significant. He notes that the men on the right face are naked to the waist. He describes them as wearing skirts. Porter remarks on the detail of a wallet hanging from the waist of the young man in the lowest pair and of a "very elegantly sculptured key" hanging from the waist of the older man in the median pair.[153]

Schapiro, in his lengthy, formal study of the sculptures at Souillac, relegated his entire consideration of the right face to a footnote.[154] In that note, he makes no distinction between the three sets of figures on the right face. He conflates them and connects them as a whole to the Sacrifice of Abraham scene on the left face of the trumeau, stating that the right face parodies the left face by reflecting images of conflict between a youth and an old man, wrestling pairs who resemble Abraham and Isaac. Schapiro also notes that the men are naked to the waist.

More detailed study of the right face has been reserved to Jérôme Baschet. It will be recalled that Baschet's book and article were concerned primarily with the identification

[153] Porter, *"The Crosses and Culture of Ireland"*, 126.
[154] Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac", 127 note 14.

of elementary geometric forms in the sculptures at Souillac that would assist in an understanding of the iconography. Baschet's opens his description of the men in the lower two of the three registers by stating that they are "combatants". He notes that, in each of the lower pairs, "a youth affronts" a mature man. He acknowledges cursorily that the "touching of their nude torsos and the ambiguity of the bodily contact … has led to interpretations of homosexuality". Baschet does not dismiss that interpretation outright, but having mentioned it to the limited extent noted above, ignores its substance entirely and continues to discuss the right face in the terminology of combat. His stated basis for approaching the right face as a scene of combat is his position that the relations between the generations, raised in the Sacrifice of Abraham scene on the left face, should inform the reading of the right face of the trumeau. Baschet notes that, "in Souillac's monastic setting, the father/son relation evokes also the relationship that unites spiritual sons (monks) to their spiritual father (the abbot or his representative)" and concludes that it is difficult to conceive that the pairs do not allude to the spiritual kinship of the monastic situation. Baschet is vague on which of the three pairs, or whether possibly all, allude to the spiritual kinship of the monastic situation. Further, he writes that, "*[t]*he keys tied to the belts of 'fathers' reinforce their position of authority". He is also vague about which keys are tied to which belts. He concludes that the horizontality of the arrangement of the lower two pairs of men creates a relationship of equals from what is and should normally be a hieratic relationship.[155] I hope to show, in this chapter, that, if the details of the right face are permitted to reveal themselves, without a preconceived

[155] Jerome Baschet, "Iconography beyond Iconography", 37.

message informing the reading, and without conflating and glossing over the pairs and their attributes, Baschet's interpretation of the right face is insufficient.

Michael Camille did not purport to present a detailed study of the sculptures at Souillac or of the right face of the trumeau.[156] His paper is much more generally related to orality and art. In the course of that paper, in which he discussed how the mouth, along with the genitals and anus, resonate with cultural connotation of exclusion, he had occasion to touch briefly on the trumeau at Souillac and to make some comments and observations that require consideration. Camille writes that, "the half-naked wrestlers on the left *[sic]* face are a stock formula of the Romanesque". He asks whether, "the embrace of the older and younger males suggest then current concerns and rules against 'the unmentionable vice' that led to the separation of young novices from the older monks in the dormitories?" He questions whether, "set alongside Abraham, the wrestling figures might draw attention to paternal love within its proper bounds, rather than to the clammy excesses of hands around flesh in carnal embrace." He commented that the "Rule of Saint Benedict stipulated that the abbot had to be 'father teaching his sons' a relationship perhaps perverted by the stones *[at Souillac]*." Camille did not purport to answer any of those questions. He just opened the subject up for further consideration and discussion.[157]

[156] Camille, "Mouths and Meaning"
[157] Camille, "Mouths and Meaning", 50-51.

4.2 The Right Face Reconsidered

I will begin my consideration of the right face with a cursory overview of the whole and will move from that overview to a more detailed consideration of its parts. On the right face of the trumeau, supported on a winged dragon, are three superposed pairs of males *[fig.12]*. The bodies of the men in each of the two lower pairs cross over one another *[figs.35&36]*, while the two males in the uppermost pair stand vertically beside one another *[fig.34]*. In each of the three pairs, there is an older, bearded man and a younger beardless male. The men in the two lower pairs, while certainly different in apparent age, are reasonably equal in height and appear to be adults. In the upper-most pair, there is a marked difference in height between the two. The figure on the left appears to be an adult, the figure on the right, a boy. I will refer to the figure on the right of the upper pair as the "boy" throughout this chapter in order to distinguish him from the other five.

I turn first to the question of the identity of these figures. Their dress, their beards and hair styles, together with any attributes that may attach to them, will be my first line of inquiry. Of the six males, the boy alone is fully clad. He wears the clothing of the laity. The five adults, as others have remarked, are naked from the waist up. Covering their bodies from their waist down are identical, sarong-like, skirts that wrap around and are held in place by a belt at the waist. The wrapped nature of the skirt permits a glimpse of the legs of the men. The skirts worn by the men do not help to identify them. In a late-eleventh century bible, described by Walter Cahn as being from Moissac, [158] a number of

[158] Cahn, vol. 1, 40.

young men are shown frolicking in the foliage within the illuminated letter "V" of *Leviticus [fig. 37]*. The sexual implications of the illumination are unmistakable. The *dishabille* of the five adults on the right face of the trumeau at Souillac is almost identical to that of the young men in the illumination in the Moissac bible. The representation of the figures in the manuscript, with one exception, tends to identify what they are doing rather than who they are. At the very base of the illuminated letter "V", supporting the young men, and in a position that focuses attention on his rear end, is a near-naked man who is identifiable by his tonsure as a Benedictine monk. The position of the monk is frankly sexual, and with the elevated legs, closely recalls the postures of that group of figures, a group which includes the *sheela-na-gig,* which is described by Anthony Weir and James Jerman to be 'sexual exhibitionists'. Weir and Jerman note that, in France and Spain, the sculptures of male sexual exhibitionists outnumber females.[159]

I now turn to the hairstyle of the six figures on the right of the trumeau at Souillac *[fig. 34, 35 &36]*. The hair of the boy, like his clothing, is quite distinct from that of the men. The boy's hair is long and flowing. It extends in length to below his shoulders. Abbot Trichet writes that, at the end of the eleventh century, the French laity wore its hair particularly long. He quotes Orderic Vitalis, whose writings were virtually concurrent with the dates traditionally attributed to the sculptures at Souillac, who criticized the nobility for wearing their hair so long that they resembled women.[160] The hair length of

[159] Weir and Jerman, 10.
[160] Trichet, *La Tonsure*, 103.

the boy, coupled with the clothing of the boy, make it likely that the boy at the top of the right face of the trumeau is a member of the laity.

Efforts to identify conclusively four of the five adults on the basis of their hairstyles and beards become an exercise in futility. The Church, at the time of the sculptures at Souillac, was attempting to impose on the secular clergy a distinctive appearance, very close to that supposedly adhered to by monks, in an effort to draw a clear demarcation between the appearance of the religious and that of the laity. Thus, Article X of the Council of Toulouse in 1119, with Pope Calixtus II presiding, and cardinals, archbishops, bishops and abbots of Gaul, Gascony, Spain and Britain unanimously assenting and confirming, provided that any monk, cleric, canon or soldier of the Church who has gone back to the beard or long hair of the laity is to be deprived of the communion of the Church until the condition has been corrected.[161]

However, it is questionable to what extent even monks actually adopted that distinctive appearance. Giles Constable's comments are telling:

> Monks were supposed to wear both a distinctive costume and to have a broader … crown than clerics, and to shave if they were ordained, but there were so many exceptions to these rules, and such great negligence in their observance, that it was often difficult […] to tell a cleric or a monk from a lay man.[162]

[161] Mansi, 226-7.
[162] Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century,* 194.

Turning specifically to beards, the requirement that monks be clean-shaven pre-dates the period of these sculptures. However, the theory and the practice relative to the clean-shaven appearance of monks do not seem to have coincided. Constable notes that beards entered the religious disputes of the time of twelfth-century reforms in two different contexts. One related to reformers who adopted the full beard in imitation of penitents and early hermits. The other is set out by Constable in the following terms:

> "*[the beard]* was worn by worldly prelates like Henry of Winchester (who was a Cluniac monk as well as a bishop) and by the dandified monks who were criticized in a … Cistercian text."[163]

The presence of a beard, therefore, does not remove a figure from consideration as a monk.

There is one figure among the adults on the right face who can be said, based upon his appearance, to be a monk. In the median row, the head on the right has a hairstyle and a cleanly-shaven face that would make Benedict himself proud. In his hairstyle and clean-shaven face, he resembles closely the monastic saint who frames the left of the Theophilus relief. Regarding the others, their hair styles are all considerably shorter than that of the boy. The bluntness of the bangs, where they have bangs, and the blunt cut of hair at the nape, would tend to place all adults (save for the man whose hair is obscured by the eagle) within the category of the religious as distinct from the laity.

[163] Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, 195.

Although age, hairstyle and beards are the most visible points of distinction among the five adults on the right at Souillac, they are not the only ones. Suspended from the waist of four of the five adults are attributes that might identify them further. Three of those attributes are conspicuous, one is well hidden. One member of the lowest pair conspicuously displays a purse of some sort. That might be an "*aumonière*" or alms purse, *[fig.38]*. The presence of the alms purse could suggest that the figure is an almoner, defined by Kerr to be "an important monastic official in Benedictine houses who exercised charity on behalf of the community and distributed alms to the deserving poor".[164] It could also identify the individual to be a member of the clergy doing pastoral works, works of charity, among the laity. It would not, in my opinion, be safe to attempt to narrow the identity of the man further based only on the purse.

Both adults within the median pair have keys hanging from their waist *[fig.39]*. The key on the right, worn by the older man with the beard, is readily apparent. It is the 'elegantly sculptured key' remarked on by Porter. The very visibility of that key makes it likely to have been intended to act as an identifying attribute. The symbol of the key could identify the man as holding monastic office, perhaps the office of abbot as suggested by Baschet,[165] perhaps that of sacrist or gatekeeper. On the other hand, if the place of the older, bearded man in the religious communities of the day does not lie within coenobitic monasticism, the symbolism conveyed by the key may be quite different. The second key, that worn by the younger, beardless man, is difficult to see

[164] Kerr, 199.
[165] Baschet's comment, tied as it was to the subject of fathers and sons, may have related to the man in the uppermost pair. Baschet is vague, perhaps deliberately, on which men it is who display the key.

with the naked eye. It is significantly smaller than is the key on the right, it is certainly not elegant, and it is hidden, tucked away within the creases of the garment of the younger man. What can safely be said is that the significance, as an attribute of identity, of the large, conspicuous key is likely to be quite different from that of the small, hidden key. The smaller, hidden key could be intended to signify that only the man with the hairstyle of a monk is cloistered as distinct from evidencing any particular office held by the man.

At the waist of the adult in the uppermost pair is a large object, a key perhaps, but not necessarily a key. It may be a straight-razor *[fig.40]*. I will comment on the potential significance of a razor when I turn to the detailed consideration of the uppermost pair. The apparently conspicuous attributes considered above have not, in themselves, proved to be particularly helpful in identifying the individuals involved.

If the designer of the program had set out to create ambiguity and uncertainty about the identity of these men, he has, with one exception, done an excellent job. It may be that the hairstyles and attributes of the individuals would have had meaning for the twelfth-century monastic viewer. All that can safely be said at this remove is that four of the five adults carry objects that could identify them as religious figures. Four of the five adults have hairstyles that tend to identify them as religious figures. One of the five adults wears the traditional hairstyle and has the clean-shaven face of a Benedictine monk and at his waist wears a small, inconspicuous key, an attribute that is in no way inconsistent with his being a coenobitic monk. I will turn now to a more detailed consideration of the

right face. The identification of the adults as religious figures, tentative at this point in respect of all but one, will be furthered by what follows in this chapter. I will begin with the two lower pairs.

4.2.1 The Lower Pairs

The most obvious features of the men in the two lower pairs is that, within each pair, their bodies of the two men cross over one another, their arms wrap around one another, and their legs interlink *[fig.35 & 36]*. That could suggest either wrestling or embracing. However, when their state of undress is considered, in its close resemblance to the undress of the sexually frolicking young men in the Moissac bible *[fig.37]*, it is reasonable to conclude that a sexual connection within each pair is suggested. When the sexual connection within each pair is coupled with the inferences to be drawn from the hairstyles and attributes discussed earlier in this chapter, I suggest that the lower right face of the trumeau would have been understood by the literate monk of the day to suggest prohibited sexual conduct by the religious, and in one instance at least, by a monk.

The conclusion that the embrace of the men in each of the two pairs may represent prohibited sexual conduct by the religious has been arrived at without reference to the formal similarity between the crossed pairs of men and the crossed felines in the small relief. The crossed bodies and interlinked legs of the men in the two pairs, however,

strongly recall the crossed lion and lioness on the small relief *[fig.27]*. The crossed lion and lioness on the small relief have, I suggest, been shown to represent the sexually impure priest and the defiling effect on that impure priest on an object of sacrifice, the ram. The formal similarity to the crossed pair in the small relief buttresses the conclusion that the crossed bodies on the right face are intended to return consideration to the theme of the sexual impurity of priests. That the right face might deal with sexual impurity of priests would also explain why the designer of the program has been so circumspect about the identifying features of the figures.

At the base of the right face is a serpent *[fig.41]*. I will return to a more detailed consideration of the serpent later in this chapter. For now, I note only its supporting presence on the right face. One of the two lower pairs stands directly on the serpent. The median pair is more removed. That might suggest the existence of a hierarchy of sin. It is necessary therefore to consider any bases for a hieratic ordering of the two lower pairs. Baschet has offered the opinion that the hierarchy on the right face, suggested by the vertical stance of the upper-most pair of man and boy relative to the more horizontal stance lower two pairs of men, reflects the failure of the younger man in those lower two pairs to defer to the proper authority of the elder. I disagree. The setting of a figure in the foreground or background in Romanesque art is a tool by which meaning is conveyed. Thus, for instance, on the trumeau at Moissac, the lioness is always set at the front of the three pairs of crossed lions *[fig.28]*. On the front face of the trumeau at Souillac, the griffin is consistently set in the foreground and the lion behind *[fig.8]*. Had the hierarchical arrangement of the two lower pairs been based solely on the failure of the

younger men in the two lower pairs to defer to the elder, as argued by Baschet, one would expect the relative position of the elder and younger in each to remain constant. In the pairs of men at Souillac, the young man is set in the foreground in one and in the background in the other. The bearded man is placed in the foreground in one and in the background in the other. The hieratic ordering of the two lower pairs therefore does not lie in the age, hair or facial hair of the men. Rather, I suggest, it lies in their exact positions in relation to one another and to the space they occupy. A closer examination of the four is required.

The older, bearded male standing directly on the serpent is significantly different from the others *[fig.36]*. He alone of the four has no identifying attribute hanging from his waist. I noted earlier that the small key on the younger, clean-shaven man at the median level was particularly difficult to find, hidden as it was in a crease in the cloth of the skirt of that man. A careful examination of the folds in the skirt of the older man on the lowest level is thereby invited. In the course of looking in the creases of the skirt of the older man, one is confronted by the crease of the man's buttocks. This man manages simultaneously to display almost full-on both his rear end and his face in a pose that is highly unnatural. His head and his lower body seem not to be connected to one another. That emphasis on the buttocks of the older man recalls the emphasis on the position of the rear end of the monk at the base of the letter 'V' *[fig.37]*. It is my thesis that the "unnatural" display of the rear end of the man on the lower right explains the hieratic ordering of the crossed pairs of adults and ultimately the hieratic ordering of the right face as a whole.

This iconographical choice, I suggest, can once more be explained by turning to the efforts of the reforming papacy to impose cultic purity on priests and, in particular, by the place of Peter Damian's writings in those efforts. Leo IX (d. 1054) was appointed pope in February of 1049. As one of his first public acts, he anathematized married priests and simoniacs. In the latter half of that same year, Peter Damian sent a lengthy and highly circulated letter to the pope which, in its content, is both a request for papal action and a lecture to the clergy.[166] This letter, Letter 31, has been referred to earlier in this paper in connection with Isaiah's prophetic comments regarding God's refusal of sacrifices from the Israelites, comparing them to the sacrificial offerings of those from Gomorrah. Specific to same-sex practices, Damian wrote that "[…] the befouling cancer of sodomy is, in fact, spreading through the clergy […]"[167] He particularized four distinct varieties of the sodomitic vice in the clergy, setting the four varieties out in what he called ascending stages of corruption and sought the removal from the clergy of all who practiced those vices:

> There are some who pollute themselves; there are others who befoul one another by mutually handling their genitals; others still who fornicate between the thighs; and others who do so from the rear.[168]

[166] That Letter 31 was intended to serve both functions is well accepted. See, for example, Payer, 13.
[167] Peter Damian, Letter 31:7.
[168] Peter Damian. Letter 31 :8. It seems to be common ground among scholars that the first category refers to masturbation, the second to mutual masturbation and the fourth to anal intercourse. The third category is variously described by scholars as femoral intercourse or intercrural intercourse. Intercrural intercourse apparently normally involves face-to-face relations between the parties: Olsen, 35. I have found nothing on the expected relative positions for femoral intercourse. It seems not to have occurred to Peter Damian that

Leo responded that he was prepared to return to office a cleric who fell within the first three categories, provided that the cleric had curbed his desires and had atoned with proper repentance. All hope of recovering his order was denied to anyone who had engaged in anal intercourse or who had committed the other acts for a long time or with many.[169]

Peter Damian characterizes the sodomitic vice as unnatural, as violating the law of nature. Comparing three men, one who assaults his own daughter, a spiritual father (bishop) who by intercourse abuses his spiritual daughter (a nun), and a bishop who defiles a cleric whom he has ordained, Peter Damian writes:

> […] in the two prior cases, even though he practices incest, he is sinning naturally, because he sinned with a woman; in the latter case, by his shameful action with a cleric he commits a sacrilege on a son, is guilty of a crime of incest on a man, and violates the law of nature.[170]

The crime is the same, that of incest. What makes the latter case the most serious, according to Peter Damian, is that it is unnatural.

It should here be recalled that, at the time of the sculptures at Souillac, the large majority of monks in reformed houses such as Souillac were ordained priests, sacrificing at the

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those who fornicate between the thighs might do so from the rear. Nor does his imagination or information appear to extend to the act of fellatio

[169] Pope Leo IX, Letter to Peter Damian 1-5, in Peter Damian. Letter 31.
[170] Peter Damian Letter 31, cap. 20.

altar.[171] Thus the increasing cultic requirement of purity for those officiating at the altar was not only seen to be an issue for the secular clergy. It applied equally to monks. In Letter 31, Peter Damian, who was himself a monk at the time, painted a picture of sodomy as being rampant among the secular clergy. He was basically silent about its presence within the walls of the cloister. The designer of the program at Souillac, like the illuminator of the Moissac bible, does not locate sodomy only among the secular clergy. The man on the right in the median row, with the haircut and clean shaven face of the Benedictine monk, wearing the small key at his waist, locates sodomy, as it is described by Peter Damian, within the cloister.

The emphasis on the rear end of the man on the lower right places him, uniquely of the men in the two lower pairs at Souillac, into that category of priest for whom restoration was not possible. The traditional hierarchy of purity was dependent on the walls of the cloister and the rules of St. Benedict to protect the virginity of the monks. Leo IX, following Peter Damian, had a different ranking for the purity of priests, one that was not based on whether they were cloistered but on whether they had engaged in anal intercourse. The lower-right face of the trumeau, I suggest, represents that ordering.

4.2.2 The Sacrifice of Child Oblation

The connection between the upper-most pair on the right face of the trumeau and the Sacrifice of Abraham on the left face, a connection that has strongly determined the interpretations of the right face by Schapiro and Baschet, is unmistakable. The upper-

[171] Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, 229.

most pair *[fig.34]* consists, not of two men of visibly-different ages, but rather of an older man and a boy. The positioning of the boy and the man mirrors that of Isaac and Abraham on the opposite face of the trumeau at the very moment that Isaac is about to be offered by Abraham as a sacrifice. The boy's hands are extended together in a gesture of submission to the authority of the older man, as are Isaac's to Abraham. The boy's head, like that of Isaac, is bowed in submission to the authority of the older man. The man holds the hair of the boy as Abraham grasped the hair of Isaac.

There are points of difference between the upper-most pair on the right face *[fig 34]* and Abraham and Isaac on the left face *[fig.24]*, some obvious, some not quite so obvious. The position of the man relative to the boy is different. Where Abraham stood to the right of Isaac, the man stands to the left, to the sinister side, of the boy. Where Abraham stands atop Mount Moriah, the man stands on the foundation of the crossed males and the serpent. Where Abraham raises his arm to slay Isaac in accordance with the will of God, the man on the right seems to fondle the long hair of the boy. Finally, the head of the man on the right is grasped by what Baschet describes as a great raptor. I will refer to the raptor as an eagle, an identification which I hope to establish later in this section by reference to the Ganymede myth.

The question of the identity of these two people arises. The boy, as has been noted earlier, has the long, flowing hair of the laity and is dressed in the clothes of the laity. He stands before the older man in a posture of submission to the will of the older man, a

posture that clearly reflects Isaac's posture of submission to the will of Abraham immediately prior to the act of near-sacrifice.

Insofar as the man is concerned, there is no reason to distinguish him at the outset from the crossed adults below who, I suggest, have been established likely to be religious officials, and in at least one case to be a monk. The man in the upper-most pair is undressed exactly as are those below him. His hair cannot be seen because of the bird, but his beard is similar to those of the men directly below him. The object suspended from his waist *[fig.40]* requires consideration. Baschet, remarking on the presence of the keys at the waist of the man, suggests that the man represents an abbot standing as a father to the boy who represents the monks, his spiritual children within his abbey.[172] I agree that abbots were often represented in art, reflective of the teaching of St. Benedict, to stand relative to the monks in their abbeys as fathers stand to children. I agree also that an abbot can be represented by keys. I do not accept, however, for reasons that follow, that the abbot/monk relationship is reflected between the man and boy in the upper-most pair on the right at Souillac. I will deal with the boy first and then return to the man. It is not reasonable that the artist would have depicted monks by showing a boy in the dress and with the long hair of the laity, particularly at a time when so much stress was being brought to bear on the need for a distinct appearance for those in the religious communities. Turning to the man, I am not confident that what is suspended from the waist of the man is a key. The keys held by St. Peter in the Theophilus relief are obviously keys. The clearly-visible key at the waist of the older man in the median pair

[172] Baschet. *L'iconographie médiévale,* 210-212.

on the right face is obviously a key. The designer of this program had no difficulty designing recognizable keys and the masons had no difficulty producing recognizable keys. What hangs from the waist of the man at the top, I suggest, is not so clearly a key. To the contrary, it may be a straight razor. An explanation for an inclusion of a straight razor, I argue, may be found in the ritual of child oblation that follows.

The upper pair on the right face of the trumeau, in its echo of the sacrifice scene on the left face of the trumeau, represents, I suggest, a boy just before he is sacrificed to God by his father. On the right side of the trumeau, the sacrifice of the boy would have been a living sacrifice, made by the earthly father of the boy to God in the monastery. That boy is standing beside a representative of the monastery who will receive the boy and his father and will arrange for the sacrifice of the boy at the altar. At Cluny, a boy who was being offered by his parents to God in the monastery was received first by the abbey chamberlain, the monastic official who was responsible for the clothing, washing, and shaving of the monks. According to Edward Mullins, the chamberlain would greet the parent and child, following which "he would remove the boy's normal clothing and replace it with a linen shirt and an oblate's habit."[173] I have found nothing specific to the cutting of the hair of an oblate in the late-eleventh or early-twelfth century. Abbot Trichet writes of the sacramental aspects of the cutting of the hair of the oblate, citing examples from each of the seventh and ninth century. He states that the ritual haircut could not be imposed on a child without the consent of parent. The effect of the rite of

[173] Mullins, 134.

the haircut was irrevocable, even for a child. It signified entry into the religious life.[174] There is nothing in Trichet's study to suggest a change in the practice relative to the cutting of the hair of children between the ninth century and the early twelfth century. The change from the clothing of the laity to the clothing of the oblate has been seen to have been effected immediately on the arrival of the boy at the monastery and before his presentation at the altar. It is reasonable to assume that the hairstyle of the boy would also be changed to reflect his new rank, particularly so if the abbey chamberlain or other monastic official who first received that child on behalf of the monastery was responsible, not only for clothing and washing of monks, but also for the shaving of the monks. The presence of a straight razor at the waist of the monastic official standing beside the boy in the uppermost pair on the right side of the trumeau would thus be appropriate to the ritual of oblation. After the boy was prepared for admission by the abbey chamberlain, the boy was brought forward to the altar during the Mass where, according to de Jong, he was received by the senior monastic official as the representative of God and the saints to whom he was offered and "became a *holocaustum* for God".[175] At the conclusion of the ceremony, the child-oblate had become a full member of the monastic community.

The practice of child oblation was the subject of active debate within the Church at or about the time of the sculptures at Souillac. An adult who wished to enter a monastery was, under the Rule of Benedict, required to serve a period of novitiate, usually of one

[174] Trichet, 65.
[175] de Jong, 176-178.

year, prior to taking final vows, during which period he or she was free to reconsider the decision. No such period was available to a child-oblate. Because the oblation of a child was seen to be a sacrifice to God, the gift of the child became absolute and irrevocable from the moment the child was presented at the altar, a presentation that occurred almost immediately upon admission. De Jong writes that, in the late-eleventh century, child oblation was widely practiced and virtually unchallenged. By the end of the twelfth century, however, child oblates, on attaining their majority, had the right to leave the monastic community if they wished. Many orders were, by the end of the twelfth century, refusing to accept children under the age of sixteen.[176] There does not appear, in the research, to be a single, definitive reason given for the ending of child oblation. The sculptures at Souillac may suggest a contributing cause.

The upper-most pair on the right face of the trumeau at Souillac, with its echo of Abraham and Isaac at the moment immediately prior to the act of sacrifice by Abraham, should, I argue, be read as the oblation of a child, the living sacrifice of a child by the father of the child to God in the monastery. To do so places that scene within the development at Souillac of the theme of the continuity of sacrifice. It does not, however, explain why the senior monastic official would be naked from the waist up, placed to the sinister side of the boy and, in particular, why he is seized by a great eagle as he looks down on the boy and touches his hair. All these unexplained features - his placement on the shoulders of the pair below, the partial undress of the senior monastic official, his placement to the sinister side of the boy, his touching the hair of the boy, and in particular

[176] De Jong, 1. For more detail on this, see Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*, 197.

the eagle, can be accounted for by importing to the reading of that scene a consideration of the Ganymede myth.

On a capital in the nave of the abbey church of at Vézelay in Burgundy there is a depiction of the scene of the abduction of Ganymede *[fig.42]*. The sculptures at Vézelay are almost contemporaneous with those at Souillac.[177] The rape of Ganymede is a classical myth about a beautiful young hunter who was desired by Jupiter. Jupiter, taking the form of an eagle, descended and carried off the boy to a life of bliss among the gods. At Vézelay a devil looks on with glee as the boy is carried away by the eagle. Boswell suggests that Ganymede may have been a synonym of the day for 'gay'.[178] In the Ganymede myth, Jupiter descends in the form of an eagle to take possession of the boy. At Souillac, I propose that lust for the boy, in the form of an eagle, takes possession of the monastic official.

My argument is this. The figures of the man and the boy on the top of the right face are not intimately crossed over one another as are the two lower pairs. On the right face, the threat to the boy is developed only to the point where the man is attacked by lust as he handles the long hair of the boy. The near-sacrifice of the boy on the right side of the trumeau echoes the near-sacrifice of the boy on the left in more than one way.

[177] Mouilleron, 112.
[178] Boswell, 245 n.7. Ilene Forsyth in "The Ganymede Capital at Vézelay" questions whether the inclusion of the Ganymede capital at Vézelay might relate to then-current concerns about child oblation.

4.2.3 The Winged Dragon

Supporting all three pairs of superposed males on the right face is a winged dragon *[fig.41]*, wrapped around the false-pilasters framing the trumeau. It differs from the twin winged-dragons beneath the throne of St. Peter *[fig.15]* only in its extended body-length and in its setting. One of those twin dragons beneath St. Peter, I have argued, represents simony, the other, represents the married priest. These are the twin vices that the early reforming popes set out to control. The winged dragon supporting the figures on the right face visually extends the concept of sexual impurity of the priest just as Peter Damian extended the concept of the sexual impurity of the priest from the married priest to other priests whose sexual conduct would defile the host.[179]

4.3 Issues of Reception

That component of the right face of the trumeau that would most likely be noticed by someone other than a monk to suggest the sexual impurity of a priest would be the two embracing pairs of males. The designer has introduced numerous false-leads to obscure the nature of that embrace. Only when the viewer has explored and rejected hieratic differences in the age of the men, their hairstyles, their facial hair, and the office they hold, only if the viewer has the time to examine creases in skirts, and only if the viewer is aware of Peter Damian's Letter 31 and Pope Leo's response, would the sexual significance of the acts of the lower two crossed-pairs clearly reveal itself. The more ominous component of the right face because of the inequality of the participants is the

[179] I use the terms sodomy and sodomitic as they were used by Peter Damian in his Letter 31, to refer to acts that fall within the four defined categories.

upper-most pairing, but the details of that scene are difficult to make out, many being obscured by the eagle. Without an understanding of the significance of the dragon on the base, of the two lower pairs above the dragon and the symbolism of the Ganymede myth, unwanted identification of the upper-most pair would not reasonably be a concern.

4.4 The Sufficiency of the Reading

The integration to the reading of the right face of the consideration of the sexual purity of the priest explains the vertical ordering of that face throughout all three pairs. Reading the upper-most pair of figures on the right to reflect child oblation connects that upper-most pair to the Sacrifice of Abraham on the left face. What is not explained by the reading I have offered is the recurrent feature on the right face of the older, bearded man and the younger, clean-shaven man (in one case a boy). There is, I suggest, more to the right face of the trumeau than has thus far been explained. A more complete understanding of the right face might be assisted by a more complete understanding of the unexplained features on the left. In that regard, it should be recalled that the serpent that has been seen to support the figures on the right face was seen, in the discussion of the left face, to wrap around the legs of the broken boy at the base.

CHAPTER V - THE FRONT FACE OF THE TRUMEAU

5.1 Introduction

The front face of the trumeau is comprised almost entirely of animal symbolism *[fig.8]*. With its unusually high relief, it gives the immediate impression of chaos and violence. Order and meaning do exist, but can be discovered only by carefully deconstructing and considering the various details of that face in the context of the balance of the sculptural program and in the context of contemporary ecclesiological and theological debates and developments.

My object in this paper has been to show that the sculptures at Souillac are not, as has previously been thought, the disconnected fragments of a larger unknowable whole but rather comprise, in themselves, an integrated and highly sophisticated program that comments, from a monastic perspective, on many of the important issues facing the Western Church in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries. My discussions of the meaning of individual sculptures have been directed to that end. The readings of the individual panels offered in this paper do not purport to be complete.[180] Themes developed elsewhere in the sculptures come together on the front face of the trumeau. Because the analyses of the lateral faces of the trumeau and the Theophilus relief are incomplete, the analysis of the front face will be incomplete. My principal focus in this chapter therefore will be to show how that front face connects to and draws into itself other components of the program. My emphasis will be on the formal connections made

[180] See p. 2 above.

between the front face and the other components of the program rather than on attempting to attribute specific meaning to components of the front face.

5.2 The Crossed Beasts

The dominant feature of the front face is the presence of four superposed-pairs of diagonally-crossed beasts *[fig.8]*. Similar to the pattern followed by the crossed lions on the small relief *[fig. 27]*, the beasts on the trumeau diverge after crossing, then turn back to face one another and grasp a common object between their teeth. The pairs on the trumeau are, while similar, significantly different from those which have been seen thus far. On the front face of the trumeau, as distinct from the small relief, the two beasts in each pair are of different species. One is a type of griffin, the other is a lion. [181] Distinct from the model of the lions on the small relief, both beasts on the trumeau are clearly male. Distinct from both the lions on the small relief and the crossed males on the right face, the crossed beasts of the trumeau do not appear to be sexually connected to one another. Even the crossed felines at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne *[fig.29]*, tamed as they were by St. Benedict, were still linked by their tails. At Souillac, the tails of the clearly-gendered beasts on the front face are not interwoven as are those of the lion and lioness on the small relief. Their legs are not interlinked as are those of the pairs of human males on the lower right face. The shared, visible connection between the two beasts in each crossed-pair on the front face is the common object which they both attack.

[181] The connection between the crossed beasts at Souillac, in both the front face of the trumeau and on the small relief, and the crossed lions on the front face of the trumeau at Moissac have been remarked upon by a number of writers. Baschet explores that connection thoroughly at "Iconography beyond Iconography" 28-29, concluding that the differentiation between species at Souillac replaces the male/female polarity at Moissac. I agree.

The griffin has not formerly been encountered in the program at Souillac. It is here presented as a composite being with the head and upper body of an eagle and the lower body of a lion. Griffins are not uncommon in Romanesque sculpture in Languedoc. They appear in both the cloister at Moissac and on the portal at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. At Moissac, they are set on a border of a capital in the cloister, fighting with lions *[fig.43]*. There, they may represent the type of broad genre figure of the monstrous or the imaginary found on capitals in the cloisters of Romanesque abbeys of which Thomas Dale writes. [182] At Souillac, however, the designer of the program takes the genre figures of confronting griffin and lion, departs from the expected in the representation of the beasts, and presents the griffin and lion, not as attacking one another, but as jointly attacking other objects.

On the upper lintel at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne *[fig 19]* is a scene which calls to mind the front face of the trumeau at Souillac. On the left of the upper lintel at Beaulieu, a group of three figures, led by a bird-headed griffin, emerges from the gaping mouth of a beast and moves toward the centre of the lintel. A lion brings up the rear of the threesome. Between the two, clutched in the jaws of the lion, with the tale of the griffin wrapped around his neck, is a naked young male. A similar, although not identical, threesome appears on the right of that upper lintel, moving toward the centre. The symbolism on the lintels at Beaulieu is not identical to that at Souillac, but its connection to Souillac is strong and detailed, and is furthered by the presence on the lower lintel of both the serpent that resembles that beneath the monastic saint at Souillac and the bear that will

[182] Dale, 405-407

also be seen to be attacked by the crossed beasts at Souillac. Dale, in attaching meaning to the monsters on the capitals of the cloister at St-Michel-de-Cuxa, wrote of the beasts on the capitals as forming broad genres rather than discernible narrative sequences. The meaning of the beasts on the front of the trumeau at Souillac and on the lintels at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne is not likely to be found within broad genres.[183]

An understanding of the symbolism of the beasts on the front face may be aided by symbolism encountered elsewhere in the sculptures at Souillac. The eagle has been seen at the top of the right face of the trumeau to attack the head of the adult male *[fig.34]*. In the context of the reading that I have advanced, the eagle represents the defiling lust experienced by the monastic official for the oblate, the object of sacrifice. The lion has been encountered on the small relief *[27]*. In that context, it represented, I argued, the secular priest who, by his sexual impurity, defiles the ram, the object of sacrifice. The lion has been discussed to this point as a component of the griffin, its rear end. In its own right, however, the lion is one member of each of the crossed pairs on the front face of the trumeau.

The connection between the griffins and lions of the front face and the scenes on the lateral faces of the trumeau is concretely underscored by the design of the trumeau. The griffins all enter the front face from the right *[fig.8]*. The tail of a griffin wraps tightly around the neck of the older man in the median pair of crossed males on the right, the man at whose waist the elegantly sculpted key was seen, while the back paw of the griffin

[183] Dale, 405-407

is supported by the leg of the other male in that median pair *[fig.35]*. The lions all enter the front face from the left. The tail of a lion drapes loosely across the ram on the left face, the ram that was delivered as a substitute object of sacrifice. The claws of one of the beasts from the front face have been shown to rest on the arm of Abraham. While those formal connections to both lateral faces of the trumeau are underscored, it is significant that the relative positions of the lion and griffin on the front face do not change. The griffin remains in the foreground through all four pairs, the lion in the background. In that respect, they differ from the relative positions of the crossed males on the lower two levels of the right face. On the front face of the trumeau at Souillac, the principal focus is on the griffin, not on the lion.

Each of the faces of the trumeau is framed in what appear to be false pilasters, quasi-structural members of the abbey church. On the lateral faces, the function of the false pilasters may be primarily a framing one, similar to the fluted frames that appear on the trumeau at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne.[184] They frame the scene but are not necessarily part of it. However, on the front face of the trumeau at Souillac, the function of the false pilasters changes *[fig.8]*. The pilasters become integrated into the meaning of the scene. Schapiro discovered the existence of a highly significant pattern taken by the crossed beasts on the front face as they wrap around the pilasters. The griffins attack the common object by emerging from within the pilaster, twisting their heads around the

[184] In her dissertation, 91-106, Knicely traces the evolution of this scalloped design from the its presence as a design feature on the trumeau at Moissac, to its framing function on the trumeau at Beaulieu and from there to the front face of the trumeau at Souillac where it becomes integrated into the meaning of the program.

pilaster, and then return again to attack "from within". The lions, on the other hand, attack "from without". [185] Conceiving of the pilasters as quasi-structural members that support the architecture of the abbey-church, the griffins attack the common object from within the monastic establishment. One should not lose sight of the fact, however, that the path of the griffins actually begins within the monastic establishment, and then leaves that establishment before returning.

5.3 The Common Objects

The common objects are, in ascending order, a stag, a bear, a bird - identified as an eagle by Baschet - and a boy *[fig.8]*. I do not accept Baschet's identification of the bird as an eagle. He reasons that the bird is an eagle because of the fierceness with which the bird fights off the attack of the griffin and the lion. The bird, however, is fighting for its very survival. The ferocity of its resistance cannot base a solid identification. In scale, the bird is smaller than the eagle on the right face and smaller than the eagle-headed griffin on the front face. However, scale is not necessarily a reliable guide in Romanesque art. More significant, I would argue, is that the eagle at Souillac has been seen to attack violently the man at the top of the right face, representing I suggest the lust experienced by that man for the oblate. It is not likely that the eagle would be portrayed as an attacking beast on the top right and then be shown as prey of the griffin and lion on the front face. While I do not accept Baschet's identification of the bird, I am unable with

[185] Schapiro, "*Sculptures at Souillac"*, 115.

confidence to identify it based only on its visual appearance. I will accordingly call it 'the bird' and will not attempt, in this paper, to narrow its identification further.

5.3.1. The Stag and the Bear

The most obvious difference between the four common objects of prey on the front face is that the lower two are quadrupeds and face downward while the upper two are not. I will begin with the lower two and try to narrow, if not explain, their symbolic place in this section of the program. The stag and the bear are naturally downward facing animals. The significance of the difference in the directions faced by quadrupeds and man had long been the subject of commentary. Naturally downward facing animals were seen to be those given to the sins of the flesh. Basil of Caesarea (d. 379), for example, in his ninth homily on the *Hexaemeron,* wrote of the difference between the direction faced by quadrupeds and that faced by man:

> Your head, O man! Is turned toward heaven; your eyes look up. When therefore you degrade yourself by the passions of the flesh, slave of your belly and your lowest parts, you approach animals without reason and becomes like one of them.[186]

[186] Basil of Caesarea, *Hexaemeron 9:2.* A similar statement is made by Augustine of Hippo in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis: 6:22* in which discussion turns to man's erect stance as distinct from that of animals: "… he must not seek earthly things as do the cattle, whose pleasure is entirely from the earth, in consequence of which they are all inclined forward .. and bent downwards. Man's body … is appropriate for his rational soul … because of that fact that he stands erect, able to look up to heaven and gaze upon the higher regions in the corporeal world…"

The stag, in medieval terms, was considered to be a 'domesticated animal' and was classified as a 'herd animal'.[187] The bear was classified as a 'beast', a term which meant wild animal.[188] Under the Old Law, the stag, as a ruminant, was considered to be a clean animal and was a fit object for sacrifice. The bear, as a wild animal, was not fit for that purpose.[189] On the front face of the trumeau, the animal that is theoretically fit for sacrifice is placed below the animal that is not *[fig.8]*. Whatever may be the basis for the vertical and hieratic organization of the common objects on the front face, it is not the relative theoretical fitness for sacrifice under the Old Law. In terms of the symbolic import of the stag and bear, Hrabanus Maurus writes that the stag signifies holy people desiring God and can even signify Christ.[190] The bear sometimes signals the devil and is seen to have its strength in its loins rather than its head.[191] Yet the bear is set above the stag.

Knicely suggests that the stag and the bear may represent game to the feudal lords as part of an overall effort to address the program to a lay audience[192]. I note that the bear is one of the three evils on the lower lintel at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. There has not been much study of the beasts on the lower lintel at Beaulieu. M.F. Hearn writes of an unpublished study of these beasts, by Roy Petre, from 1969, in which the author locates the bear within the *Book of Daniel* 7:5. Petre, according to Hearn, associates the seven-

[187] Hrabanus Maurus, 213.
[188] Hrabanus Maurus, 238-9.
[189] Hrabanus Maurus, 135.
[190] Hrabanus Marus, 219
[191] Hrabanus Maurus, 239. Baschet writes that the status of the bear began to diminish in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as the Church condemned its unrestrained sexuality: "Iconography beyond Iconography", 30-31.
[192] Knicely, "Food for Thought", 16-18.

headed monster with *Revelation* 13:1-4; and the four headed monster as possibly being a variant of the seven-headed monster.[193] Having regard to the connection between the symbols on the front face of the trumeau at Souillac and those on the lintels at Beaulieu, it is certainly unlikely that the bear and stag at Souillac are intended to evoke connections to hunting. All that can safely be said at this point is that the hieratic ordering of the common objects on the front face is not determined by their fitness for sacrifice or their generally understood symbolic purity.

What is also exceptional about the portrayal of the stag and bear on the front face of the trumeau *[fig.8]* is that the two quadrupeds do not stand on their four legs facing downward as they do in nature. Their pose is, to use a word that has previously been encountered in this paper, unnatural. Their heads face downward while their rear ends face vertically upward. The two quadrupeds represent those who, like the man on the bottom level of the front face, are beyond the possibility of restoration. It is not my suggestion that the bear and stag have been subject to anal intercourse, simply that, as a result of the attacks by crossed beasts, they, like those who have engaged in anal intercourse, are beyond restoration.

5.3.2. The Boy and the Bird

On the right face of the trumeau is a boy dressed in the clothing of the laity, with the long hair of the laity who, I have argued, is about to be offered up as a living sacrifice to God in the monastery. The rite of entry would have entailed the removal of his clothing and

[193] Hearn, 179-180, *n. 9*

likely the cutting of his hair. At the top of the front face is a boy whose hair is short relative to the hairstyle of the laity and relative to the hairstyle of the boy on the right *[fig.44]*. The boy at the top of the front face is totally naked, save for a cloth draped around his neck. As de Jong has written, at the time of the sculptures at Souillac, child oblation, the living sacrifice of a boy to God in the monastery, was still accepted.

The bird may also represent a sacrifice that was acceptable to God. Hrabanus Maurus writes that "…people who free themselves for contemplation are winged, not mixing at all in earthly business." He continues "… the perfect person empties himself for contemplation and considers higher things. If he offers his way of life or his life as an oblation, he offers a gift of turtledoves or doves…"[194] Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141), writing in Paris almost contemporaneously with the sculptures at Souillac, in his exegetical work on the animals in the ark, states of the bird, "the flying creatures signify the activity of incorruptible nature. We will take flight in mind through contemplation."[195] Any person who sacrifices his life by entering the contemplative religious calling could thus be represented by a bird. Both the boy and the bird are shown on the front face in the course of being bodily attacked and pulled downward by the crossed beasts. Unlike the stag and bear, however, the boy and the bird are still upward facing. Their fate has not finally been sealed.

[194] Hrabanus Maurus, 135
[195] Hugh of St. Victor, *PL* 176:632 - 33

5.4 Formal Signs

The designer has inserted certain anomalies and irregularities in the arrangement of the front face, anomalies and irregularities that may be intended to convey meaning. Each of the bear and the stag is rigidly centered between the attacking beasts with which it is paired. In addition to that rigid centrality, each is depicted in a starkly vertical descent, a verticality that recalls the descending path of the ram on the left face of the trumeau. Each of the boy and the bird, on the other hand, is set somewhat eccentrically between the attacking beasts with which it is paired. The upper body of each of the boy and the bird is directed toward the upper right corner of the front face of the trumeau, a diagonal which recalls the ascending path of the ram in the small relief. The direction of each of the boy and the bird is in stark contrast to the absolute verticality of the path of the bear and stag below, just as the direction of the ram in the small relief has been noted to be in stark contrast to the absolute verticality of the descent of the ram on the left face of the trumeau.

What has not been mentioned to this point is that there was, in addition to the sacrificial aspect of child oblation that has previously been discussed, a sacramental aspect to oblation. Both were the subject of considerable dispute in the Church at the time of these sculptures. In its ritual, the sacrifice of a child to God in the monastery was directly connected to the sacrament of the Mass. Patricia Quinn, drawing on numerous primary sources such as the historian Paul the Deacon, Hildemar and Hrabanus Maurus, gives a detailed account of the ceremony that took place at the altar, at least in the ninth century,

and of the sacramental implications of that ceremony. A direct and deliberate connection is made in that ceremony between the offering of the child and the oblation of the Mass. In Cluniac ceremonies, the gifts to God were assembled together at the altar - the bread, the altar-cloth, the wine, the child and the *petitio* from the child's earthly father. The child carried the bread and the *petitio* wrapped in the altar cloth in his right hand and the sacramental wine in the container in his left. The abbot took the bread, wine and altar cloth from the child, then took the child and the *petitio* from the child's earthly father.[196] De Jong also stresses the importance of the cloth and its connection to the Eucharistic sacrament. According to De Jong, "*[b]*y holding the bread and wine that was about to be consecrated and by touching the altar cloth, the child … became a *holocaustum* for God".[197] Ritually, the oblation of the child is connected to the host at the moment of consecration through the altar cloth.

I had argued, in respect of the direction taken by the ram on the small relief *[fig.27]*, that the sacramental aspects of the Eucharistic rite may have been thus engaged. It is possible that the direction taken by the boy and the bird at the top of the right face of the trumeau may similarly engage the sacramental aspects of oblation and monasticism *[fig.44]*. Pelikan writes that the debates on the efficacy of the sacraments, begun with the concern about the real presence, exacerbated by concerns about simoniacal, excommunicate and married priests, ultimately led to a reconsideration by the Church of the whole area of sacramental theology. He states, "… the twelfth century was to be the time when the

[196] Quinn, 136 - 139.
[197] de Jong, 176.

definition, as well as the number, of the sacraments achieved final specification."[198] More work remains to be done on the debates relating to the various sacraments, particularly in respect of any debates that might touch on the sacramental aspects of child oblation and the monastic profession.

There is an additional feature of the design of the front face of the trumeau that should be noted. In its design *[fig.8]*, the front face of the trumeau actually appears to pull the abbey church itself into any reading. The top of that face, uniquely among the three faces of the trumeau, opens up like a funnel to that which is above it. Baschet speaks of the effect of torsion produced by the crossed beasts on the front of the trumeau.[199] The combination of the opening up of the front face and the torsion appears to pull the monastic setting into the reading.

Further, as I had noted earlier in this part, the griffins and the lions seem to wrap around the pilasters that frame the front face, pilasters that give the appearance of being quasi-structural members supporting the impost above. Schapiro observes that, in respect of the front face, if those pilasters are conceived as quasi-structural members, "we are shown this function in the very process of its disturbance by the action of more powerful, non-architectural forces. […] Another pull *[by the excited beasts]* and the whole structure will topple down into a shapeless heap."[200]

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[198] Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology: (600-1300)*, 187.
[199] Baschet, "Iconography beyond Iconography", 30
[200] Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac", 116.

There are other formal aspects of the design of the front of the trumeau that are not obvious or immediately explained, the significance of which may become clearer when the meaning of each of the Theophilus relief and the lateral panels of the trumeau is more fully developed. On the left of the trumeau, the Sacrifice of Abraham has been shown to have been presented in two scenes rather than the usual three. Not only were there two scenes, but the spatial division of the left face reflected that fact. On the right face of the trumeau, there were three pairs of males, a feature reflected in the three-part divide of the right face. On the front, there are four pairs of crossed beasts, each with its common object. A reasonably equal distribution of the height of the front face among the four would be expected, but that is not what occurs. In fact, the amount of space on the front face allocated to the two upper common objects is disproportionately small *[fig.8]*. On the left face, the decision to depict the Sacrifice of Abraham in two scenes, rather than the more usual three, signaled meaning. In the Theophilus relief, the decision to depict the legend in two scenes, rather than one, signaled meaning. The irregular allocation of space on the front face should be considered in any attempt to understand the meaning of that face.

The irregularity of the spatial arrangement on the front face is accomplished in part by flattening the X-shape of the crossed beasts at the top of the front face *[fig.44]*. Thus the naked rear end of the boy appears almost to sit on the back of the supporting griffin, while the lion takes the boy's head into his mouth. The sexual symbolism of the boy's naked rear end on the back of the griffin recalls the rear end of the man on the lower right of the trumeau and the rear end of the monk in the Moissac bible illumination *[fig.37]*. In

that context, it is difficult to avoid the sexual symbolism of the lion's taking the boy's head into his mouth. In each of the other three pairs, both beasts attack the torso of the object that is common to them. That formal distinction will have to be considered.

It might be possible at this time to hazard an explanation for those and other features of the front face, but without a more complete development of the meaning of the remaining sculptures, it would be inadvisable to do so.

CONCLUSION

Arthur Kingsley Porter, in his early work on the art of the pilgrimage roads, attempted to account for what he termed, "the creation of cases of art in the midst of deserts".[201] Among those remarkable artistic achievements, he places the sculptures now set on the inner-west wall of the abbey church at Souillac. Porter's interest lay in style and in the spread of artistic forms, which are not the subjects of my paper. That said, however, the same sense of bewilderment and awe that Porter expressed on regarding, at Souillac, the "altogether remarkable trumeau", or the figure of Isaiah, which "haunts every memory", should not be restricted to matters of artistic style. In that same small Languedocian abbey church, in the middle of nowhere, there is a sculptural program from the early-twelfth century which I believe is exceptional in its iconography. The program at Souillac takes known biblical and religious narratives and known artistic forms and turns them from the purposes for which they were ordinarily used in the religious art and text of the day in order to offer sophisticated comment on some of the most contentious political, theological and ecclesiological issues of the era.

The program at Souillac was developed at a time of turbulence within the Church. Reformers were seeking, among other things, to eliminate lay interference within the Church and to establish the primacy of the papacy. They were intent on creating a distinct priestly order and defining the necessary qualities for priesthood. Questions arose and were debated concerning the meaning and number of the sacraments and the

[201] Porter, *Art of the Pilgrimage Roads*, Vol. 1, 198.

effect on their efficacy of the unworthy or excommunicate priest. Not all of those changes were uniformly embraced within the Church. To the contrary, many of those changes were highly contentious and set segments of the larger religious community against one another. I believe that, in this paper, even though my readings of many of the sculptures have been incomplete, I have made a strong case for a reading of the sculptures that would place them within the debates that accompanied at least certain of those reforming efforts.

The largest of the sculptures, the Theophilus relief, initially appears to reflect the Theophilus legend, a story that was known in early-twelfth century France and was used by the Church to promote the virtues of sincere repentance and the mercy of the Virgin. It has long been recognized by historians that the representation at Souillac, both formally and through the inclusion of features that form no part of the original, has deviated from the legend in both its expected content and emphases. I believe that I have established that, by those deviations, the designer of the relief turned the legend to a consideration of issues such as simony and of the power to invest.

The biblical story of the Sacrifice of Abraham, ordinarily used in the art of the early twelfth century to prefigure the willing self-sacrifice of Christ in the Passion and in the Eucharist is also presented differently at Souillac. It is presented to emphasize, not the willingness of the son to his own sacrifice, but the primacy of the father in the event. That same biblical story of the Sacrifice of Abraham becomes, in addition, a vehicle to introduce a consideration of the effect on the Eucharistic sacrament of the sexually

impure priest. Isaiah, ordinarily used in the art of the day to prophecy the virgin birth, and Joseph, ordinarily used in the art of the day to support and protect the holy family, are used at Souillac to introduce considerations relating to the cultic purity of the priest. These are all issues that were, at the time of the sculptures at Souillac, under active and contentious debate within the Church. The sufficiency of Joseph's model to handle the Eucharistic presence is directly pertinent to the debates on the married priesthood. The willingness of God to accept sacrifice from the impure citizens of Gomorrah, prefigured by Isaiah, is directly pertinent to then-current debates on the efficacy of the sacraments.

The right face of the trumeau does not represent a known narrative. I believe I have shown, however, that it does build on and develop themes raised elsewhere, themes related to the sexual purity of priests and sacrifice. It directly engages issues of contemporary debate relating to the appearance of the priest, the status of child oblation and raises a subject that does not appear frequently in writing, the sexual abuse of a child by an unworthy priest who stands in the place of a parent. The front face of the trumeau draws into itself a consideration of the issues developed elsewhere in the program.

My object in this paper was not to explore fully the meaning of the sculptures. It was to show that the sculptures now situated on the inner-west wall at Souillac are not simply the fragmentary remains of something unknowable. Rather, when the logic of the sculptures is gradually permitted to reveal itself, as it would likely have revealed itself to the literate monks at Souillac, the sculptures in fact form a highly coherent and fully-

integrated iconographic program that comments on many of the significant and contentious issues of the day.

[fig.1] Inner-west wall of the nave of the abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.2] South portal of the abbey church of Saint Pierre, Moissac. c.1115- c.1135(?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.3] South portal of the abbey church of Saint Pierre, Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.4] Theophilus relief. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120 - c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.5] Sacrifice of Abraham. Left face of the trumeau in the abbey church of Sainte Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.6] Isaiah. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?)
Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.7] Joseph. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140(?)
Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012

[fig.8] Front face of the trumeau. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.9] Narrative component of the Theophilus relief. Detail of the Theophilus relief. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.10] Second scene of Theophilus and the devil showing the ritual handclasp of feudal homage. Detail of the Theophilus relief. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.11] Entrance to the nave within remains of the tower-porch.
Parish church of Saint Martin, Souillac. c. late 12th century (?)
Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.12] Right face of the trumeau. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.13] St. Peter. Detail of the Theophilus relief. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.14] Monastic saint. Detail of the Theophilus relief. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.15] Winged dragons beneath St. Peter. Detail of the Theophilus relief. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.16] Serpent beneath the monastic saint. Detail of the Theophilus relief. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.17] First scene of the devil and Theophilus. Detail of the Theophilus relief. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.18] St. Peter above Simon Magus. Porte Miègeville. Basilica of St.-Sernin, Toulouse. c. 1097 - c. 1110 (?). Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.19] Lintels. Detail of the south portal. Abbey church of Saint Pierre at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.20] *Sacrifice of Abraham*. Capital originally from the ambulatory around the choir of the abbey church at Cluny, destroyed during the French Revolution. The capital is now located in the Musée de Cluny. c. 1100.

[fig.21] *Sacrifice of Abraham*. Capital from the north side of the nave, just before the crossing, in the abbey church at Conques, c. 1100 (?).

[fig.22] Sacrifice of Abraham. South face of capital 1 in the west gallery of the cloister of the abbey church of Saint-Pierre, Moissac. c. 1085 - c. 1100.
Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.23] *Sacrifice of Abraham.* Capital from the north transept of the Basilica of St. Sernin, Toulouse. c.1080-c.1100.

[fig.24] *Sacrifice of Abraham*. Detail of the left face of the trumeau in the abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c. 1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.25] *Sacrifice of Abraham.* Capital on the north side of the pier separating the first and second bays of the north aisle. Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun. c. 1125-c.1145.

Photo: Madam_Dulac, undated. Written permission has been obtained from Madam Dulac for the use of this photo.

[fig.26] Broken figure of a boy. Detail at the base of the left face of the trumeau in the abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.27] Small relief. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140(?)
Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.28] Front face of the trumeau located in the South porch of the abbey church of St. Pierre, Moissac. c.1115-c.1135 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.29] Crossed lions beneath the standing figure of St. Benedict. Jambage of the south porch of abbey church of St. Pierre, Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. c.1120-c.1140 (?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.30] Capital with vines and grape clusters. Narthex of the abbey church of St. Pierre, Moissac. c.1115-c.1135(?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.31] Isaiah. Jamb of the south portal of the abbey church of St. Pierre, Moissac. c.1115-c.1135(?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.32] "OSEPH". Detail of Joseph. Abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140(?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.33] *Adoration of the Magi*. Right lateral wall of the south porch of the abbey church of St. Pierre, Moissac. c.1115-c.1135(?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.34] Upper-most pair of males. Detail of the right face of the trumeau in the abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140(?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.35] Median pair of males. Detail of the right face of the trumeau in the abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140(?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.36] Lowest pair of males. Detail of the right face of the trumeau in the abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140(?) Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.37] Letter V from *Leviticus,* in *Vetus Testamentum pars, c. 1000- c.1100,* (Moissac bible), Bib. Nat. Ms lat. 52, fol. 49r. Bibliotheque Nationale de France.
Source: gallica.bnf.fr (accessed Dec. 10, 2012).

[fig.38] Detail of the purse worn by the younger man in the lowest pair of males on the right face of the trumeau at the abbey-church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac, c.1120-c.1140(?). The photograph is taken from a cast made from the original. The cast is on display at the Galerie des Moulages, in Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Paris. Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.39] Detail of keys worn by the males at the median level of the right face of the trumeau at the abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac, c.1120-c.1140(?). The photograph is taken from a cast made from the original. The cast is displayed at the Galerie des Moulages, in the Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Paris.
Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.40] Detail of object suspended from the waist of the adult male on the upper right face of the trumeau at the abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac, c.1120-c.1140 (?). The photograph is taken from a cast made from the original. The cast is displayed at the Galerie des Moulages, in the Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Paris.
Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012

[fig.41] Winged serpent at the base of the right face of the trumeau in the abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140(?). Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.42] *The Abduction of Ganymede.* Nave capital 12. Abbey church of la Madeleine, Vézelay. c.1120-c.1140.

[fig.43] Lions and griffins. Abacus of the north face of capital 53 in the east gallery of the cloister at the abbey church of Saint-Pierre, Moissac. c.1085-c.1100. Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

[fig.44] Detail of the front face of the trumeau in the abbey church of Sainte-Marie, Souillac. c.1120-c.1140(?). Photo: C.R. Krindle, 2012.

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